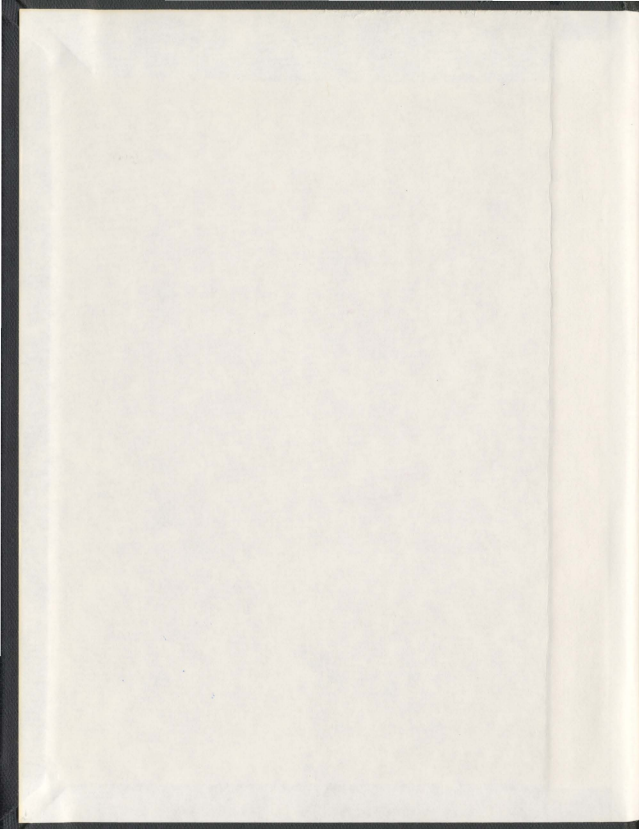


A TASTE OF SCOTLAND?:  
REPRESENTING AND CONTESTING SCOTTISHNESS  
IN EXPRESSIVE CULTURE ABOUT HAGGIS

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by  
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*For Jennifer and Jonathan*

*And in honour of my Grandpa Walker*

## **Abstract**

This thesis investigates the corpus of expressive cultural materials that have developed, over the past two and a half centuries, around haggis as a symbol and stereotype of Scottish ethnicity. Interpreting the dish as a key site of "the contention that is Scotland" (McCracken-Flesher 2002), I argue that these diverse cultural texts and traditions encode multiple and often competing representations of Scottishness as created and disseminated by both in- and outsiders.

The thesis explores three strands within the expressive culture surrounding the dish. Firstly, it traces the emergence of haggis as a culinary stereotype of Scottishness within eighteenth-century English cultural discourse, as part of the caricature of the "beggarly Scot." The exoteric construction of haggis as distinctively Scottish is contextualised as part of a much wider cultural phenomenon, whereby derogatory representations of their food and eating habits were used to stigmatise the Scots as England's closest ethnic Other. The evolution of such stereotypes reflects the complex tensions inherent in Anglo-Scottish relations throughout this period.

Secondly, I consider the motif of the grotesque body as a prominent theme within expressive cultural portrayals of haggis. Two distinct but interrelated manifestations of this theme are identified and discussed: 1) a preoccupation with the dish's physiological effects on the bodies of its consumers; and 2) the frequent figuration of haggis itself as a grotesque body. I argue that in these depictions the dish acts as a culinary metaphor for

the Scottish body politic, embodying competing conceptualisations of Scottishness as represented from esoteric and exoteric perspectives.

Thirdly, I analyse the dish's status as a contested symbol of Scottish identity among Scots themselves. I examine its role within the symbolic iconography by which Scotland has traditionally represented itself to the outside world, and its subsequent entanglement in debates concerning the authenticity and cultural legitimacy of such representations. These issues are further explored through a case study of the ritual that surrounds the dish in the context of the annual Burns Supper and other public celebrations of Scottishness.



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## List of Abbreviations

BM Satires xxxx	These numbers, quoted after the titles of satirical prints, refer to the catalogue numbers assigned in Frederic Stephens's <i>Catalogue of prints and drawings in the British Museum: Division I, political and personal satires</i> (1870-83).
CSD	Mairi Robertson, ed., <i>Concise Scots dictionary</i> (1985).
OED	<i>Oxford English dictionary</i> (2000-).
SND	<i>Scottish national dictionary</i> , in <i>Dictionary of the Scots language</i> (2004).

## Chapter 1. Introduction: "A curious beast"

The May 2009 issue of Scottish Studies ezine *The Bottle Imp*, a special issue on Scottish national identity, introduces its theme with these reflections:

...the Scottish national identity is a curious beast. It is a mixture, an amalgam, formed of lumps and lights and broken pieces, spiced and dressed and crammed around inside itself, running around the bens and glens. It frolics in the world's imagination. Of course, it is not without its internal conflicts. In this issue of *The Bottle Imp*, we open up the creature for a thorough investigation, warm-reekin, rich.... ("Unreliable Narrator" 2009, [1])<sup>1</sup>

Although the reader unfamiliar with Scottish culture may have difficulty in deciphering the metaphor at play in this passage, for the Scot it is instantly recognisable as that of a haggis – Scotland's "supreme national dish" (McNeill 1976, 172) – despite the fact that the word *haggis* itself is never mentioned. I choose to begin with this quotation because, in a few short but tightly packed lines, it sets the scene for the perspective on haggis and its interrelationship with Scottishness that underpins this thesis. Specifically, as I will demonstrate below, it encapsulates the notion of the haggis as a collection of diverse expressive cultural texts and traditions that encode particular representations and perceptions of Scottishness. Familiarity with these texts and traditions on the part of the reader is essential in order fully to appreciate the passage, which is precisely why it is likely to pose such interpretive difficulties for the cultural outsider. It is therefore worth

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<sup>1</sup> The *Bottle Imp* is published twice yearly by the Association of Scottish Literary Studies. A development of the Scottish Writing Exhibition, it "exists to promote and support the teaching and study of Scottish literature and language" (*Bottle Imp* 2011). Its title is borrowed from that of one of Robert Louis Stevenson's short stories.

spending a few moments at the outset unpacking the workings of its central metaphor and the layers of meaning it conveys.

The prevailing image in this passage is that of Scottish national identity as a mixture or amalgam, replete with “internal conflicts.” The description of this mixture – “formed of lumps and lights and broken pieces, spiced and dressed and crammed around inside itself” – vividly evokes the contents of a haggis with only the subtlest of allusions to the dish’s actual ingredients, that is to say, sheep’s heart, liver and lungs (or “lights”) minced with suet, oatmeal, onions and spices, then crammed into the animal’s stomach-bag (quite literally “inside itself”) and boiled (see Figure 1.1). In fact, the description in this passage is doubly resonant because it captures another, figurative meaning of *haggis*, as “[a] mixture [or] hodge-podge; a mess” (*OED*), a meaning that has a considerable history within Scottish cultural discourse.<sup>2</sup> This usage clearly derives by analogy from the contents of the culinary haggis, for, as Christie Davies notes, the dish exemplifies the category of “shapeless foods of mixed ingredients” and “uncertain contents” that not only provide popular subjects for food-based ethnic humour, but are also frequently used as metaphors for muddle and disorder (Davies 1990, 302, 300).<sup>3</sup> Such disorder need not be

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<sup>2</sup> Surprisingly, the *SND* makes no mention of *haggis* in the sense of a mixture or hodge-podge, including only that of a mess or “botched job,” as in: “He’ll just mak a haggis o’ the job,” and “makkin’ the most aafil heggis o’ id that thoo iver saa [*making the most awful haggis of it that you ever saw*].”

<sup>3</sup> In relation to the “uncertain contents” of haggis, Mary Ellen Cohane writes that the dish’s ingredients “are not only indistinguishable but, even if they were known, highly suspect” (1985, 27). Other dishes that have been adopted as culinary metaphors for “incongruous mixtures” or “medleys” in this sense include peasemeal, olla podrida or olio, porridge, and casserole (*OED*).



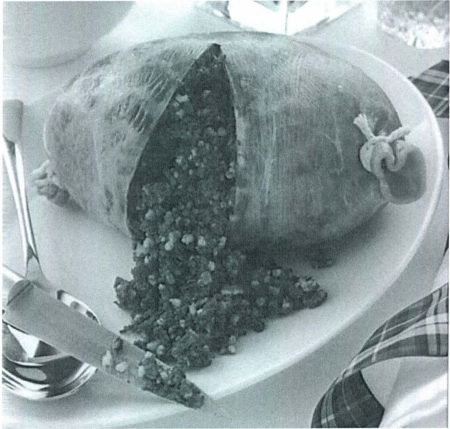


Figure 1.1. A culinary haggis: Sheep's pluck minced with suet, oatmeal, onions and spices, and traditionally boiled in the animal's stomach-bag (cover image from celebrity chef Clarissa Dickson Wright's pocket guide to *The haggis* (1999))

characterised negatively, however, but may in fact be regarded as generating a creative profusion of competing meanings and perspectives that actively resist containment within any single dominant interpretive framework. This is illustrated particularly clearly, for example, by the cultural symbolism encoded in the depictions of uncontrollable exploding and overflowing haggises discussed in Chapter 3.

A significant extension of this figurative definition, and one that is oddly neglected by the dictionaries, is the use of the term *haggis* to refer to a literary miscellany containing an assortment of materials, typically of a humorous or light-hearted nature, and usually specifically Scottish or connected in some way to Scotland.<sup>4</sup> Several such self-described literary haggises were published in Scotland and beyond throughout the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, and examples continue to appear to this day. The earliest literary haggises were usually explicitly intended to be illustrative of the nature, range and quality of Scottish wit.<sup>5</sup> An insight into the content typical of such

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<sup>4</sup> The *OED* dates the use of the word *haggis* in the sense of a mixture or hodge-podge only as far back as 1899. It cites one such literary haggis (cf. Archbold 1928) as an example under this definition, but does not acknowledge the underlying concept of the literary haggis as a distinct usage of the term.

<sup>5</sup> For examples of literary haggises, see Foolie 1821; Webster 1822; [Webster] 1829; *Scotch haggis* [ca. 1840-50?]; *Scotch haggis* 1858; Murdoch 1874; *Scotch haggis* [1901?]; Sommerville 1903; *Hospital Haggis* 1917; Archbold 1928; Kerr 2003; and Thomson 2006. The self-described literary haggis as a genre appears to have emerged, at least in part, in response to the proliferation of equivalent publications promoting the humour of England and of Ireland. In the preface to his *Scotch haggis* of 1822, for example, David Webster bemoans the fact that “[w]e have had ‘the Spirit of English Wit,’ and ‘the Spirit of Irish Wit,’ collected into a focus, while the spirit and substance of Scottish wit has been left to evaporate in the desert air”; he adds: “This defect we have attempted in some measure to remedy by bringing forward the following collection” (iv). Similarly, the epigraph to William Foolie’s *Scots haggis* (1821) explains that it contains “little spice of English Eloquence [and] nothing of Irish Hospitality,” but is “well

publications, and the perceived appropriateness of the culinary metaphor underlying their choice of title, can be found in the preface to David Webster's *Scotch haggis* of 1822, in which he describes the work as:

[a] collection of Anecdotes, Bon Mots, Jests, Puns, and Droll Stories, no inconsiderable portion of which are original, which it is hoped will show that the Scots are possessed of some wit, both in spirit and substance. To this we have added some curious articles of literature, and a pretty copious collection of Epitaphs and Inscriptions, both original and selected, the whole almost exclusively Scottish, making altogether a miscellany not ill suited to its title, "*a haggis*," which to our northern palates, is a very agreeable dish, although the materials of which it is composed, are like old chaos, jumbled together without order or regularity. (iv-v)

The poetic epigraph to the second edition of Webster's work (1829) makes the analogy between the culinary and the "intellectual" haggis particularly clear, liberally borrowing imagery and phrases from that most famous of all expressive cultural texts about the dish, Robert Burns's mock-heroic address "To a Haggis" (1786)<sup>6</sup>:

Ance on a day a Scotsman thought	<i>once upon a time</i>
Himsel' completely blest,	
Whan he a reekin' Haggis got	<i>when, steaming</i>
An' horn spoon in his fist.	
But noo we see in latter days,	<i>now</i>
<i>An Intellectual Haggis</i>	
Is priz'd aboon't, or yet oucht else	<i>above it, aught</i>
That jaups in plates or luggies.	<i>splashes/quivers, dishes/vessels</i>
([Webster] 1829, frontispiece)	

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seasoned with Scots Partiality." Continuing with the culinary metaphor, Foolie breaks into verse, imploring: "Ye Muses nine, my mentals all inspire,/ My Haggis for to salt, as times require" (title page).

<sup>6</sup> For comparison, the text of Burns's "To a Haggis" is included in Appendix A.

The accompanying illustration shows a group of four men sitting around a table, one of whom is cutting into a steaming haggis while another is reading a book, which we are presumably intended to interpret as the "Intellectual Haggis" now before us (see Figure 1.2). The connection is made explicit in an obviously derivative image featured on the cover of an anonymous *Scotch haggis* of 1858, in which the title "SCOTCH HAGGIS" is visible on the front of the book being read by one of the men at the table (*Scotch haggis* 1858). The front cover of Robert Somerville's *Scotch haggis* of 1903, meanwhile, features an image of a steaming haggis accompanied by a caption – "Warm-reekin' [*steaming*], rich!" – lifted directly from Burns's "To a Haggis," and similarly suggestive of the correlation between the rich contents of the culinary haggis and those of the literary haggis that the reader is about to enjoy.<sup>7</sup>

The analogy is perhaps best illustrated in *Sandy McTartan's Hogmanay haggis*, by Alex Murdoch (1874), which is clearly intended as a literary haggis similar to those already discussed. In this instance, however, the literary haggis device is introduced by means of a frame story, in which the title character invites two friends to his attic abode to celebrate the birth of the new year by dining on a haggis. McTartan explains to his companions that the haggis on the table in front of them is "spiced with a stuffin' o' Scotch literature" contributed by various members of the fictional Thistle Club, of which he is "perpetual President." After the dish is cut open, each member of the company

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<sup>7</sup> Similarly, the epigraph to a travelogue composed in the 1870s by Dr. James Douglas, with contributions by three of his family members, describes the work as: "A Haggis. From materials gathered in the Holy Land and Egypt, mixed and cooked by four fellow travelers, and served by the Chef de Cuisine" (D[ouglas] 1876, [i]).

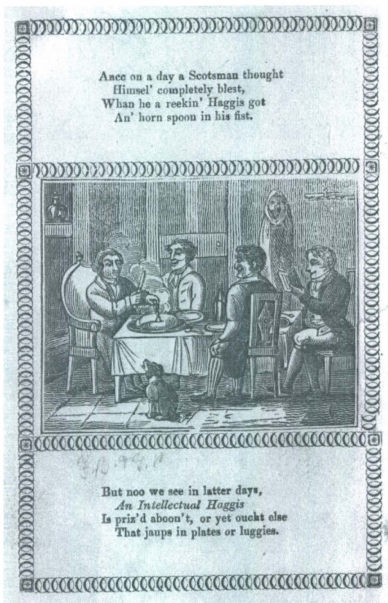


Figure 1.2. "An Intellectual Haggis": Frontispiece to David Webster's *New Scotch haggis* (1829) (Glasgow University Library Special Collections)



must take it in turn to extract a scroll of manuscript from among the edible ingredients, and must then recite its contents to the others (Murdoch 1874, 21). The resultant assortment of songs, rhymes and stories constitutes the figurative haggis, or miscellany, which is interspersed with the frame tale throughout. The book's title can thus be read as a reference both to the work itself as a literary haggis in the figurative sense, and to the haggis featured in the frame tale, literally stuffed with scraps of manuscript in addition to its other ingredients.

Nineteenth- and early-twentieth-century critics similarly evoked the concept of the literary haggis in describing works that incorporated a wide variety of miscellaneous content, whether or not that content bore any particular relationship to Scotland. A review of H. J. Dukinfield Astley's *Memorials of old Norfolk* in the *Antiquary* of May 1908, for example, states that "[e]ach volume of this handsomely produced 'Memorials' series is an excellent literary haggis. It provides the reader with 'fine confused feeding' – confused only in the sense of being highly varied" (Review.... 1908, 197). More recently, a review of Scottish travel books in the *Boston Globe* of December 14, 1986 describes Paul Harris's *Scotland: An anthology* as "a literary haggis: a compendium of descriptions, poems, comments, jokes, gibes and boasts about Scotland through the ages" (Davis 1986, B18; cf. Fortune 2001).

The key point underlying this brief survey of an admittedly somewhat obscure genre is that the literary haggis, whether the label is self-applied or ascribed to a work by a reviewer, has its basis in a conceptualisation of the haggis as a collection of diverse texts, and that this meaning of the term *haggis* is thus highly resonant within Scottish

cultural discourse. Returning to the passage from the *Bottle Imp* with which we began, it should now be possible to see how this passage not only references (at the level of text) but also enacts (at the level of form) the conceptualisation of a haggis in this sense. In other words, the passage is itself a tightly packed literary haggis: a curious mixture of cultural references, allusions and fragments of discourses – “lumps and lights and broken pieces” – that the reader must fit together in order to make sense of the whole. In the process, the passage reveals the complex layers of expressive cultural texts and traditions out of which the interrelationship between haggis and Scottishness has evolved over the past two and a half centuries.

Simply put, the passage is almost meaningless without some familiarity, on the part of the reader, with these expressive cultural texts and traditions. It assumes that we are aware, firstly, of the tall tale tradition that depicts the haggis as a legendary creature native to the Scottish Highlands (cf. Fraser 2003; and Chapter 3, below): this is the “curious beast” of the quotation, “running around the bens and glens” of the legendary landscape, but at the same time existing only “in the world’s imagination.” Secondly, as we have already seen, the passage draws on the figurative meaning of *haggis* as a mixture or miscellany, at the level of both text and form. In its reference to “open[ing] up the creature for a thorough investigation,” with its overtones of dissection and disembowelment, the passage goes on to invoke the grotesque body motif that, as I argue in Chapter 3, is a central theme within much of the expressive culture surrounding the dish. It ends with an allusion to Burns’s “To a Haggis,” in which the poet’s words – “warm-reekin, rich” – are not marked as quotation but rather are seamlessly incorporated

into the text, exemplifying the way in which Burns's works have "entered tradition," confounding the "fixity of text" in favour of the infinite play of intertextuality typical of vernacular culture (Brown 1984, 80, 72; cf. Thomas 1994, 113).<sup>8</sup> Indeed, the entire passage is an intertext composed of fragments of expressive cultural texts and traditions about the dish. Moreover, in its metaphorical presentation of Scottish national identity *as* haggis, it suggests that these texts and traditions can also be read as texts about Scottishness itself.

It is precisely this notion – that of the haggis as a collection of texts encoding particular representations of and attitudes towards Scottishness – that underpins my own approach to exploring the large and varied corpus of expressive cultural traditions surrounding the dish. The contents of this cultural haggis can be conceptualised as a mixture or amalgam in a number of ways. The representations of Scottishness that they encode are multiple and often conflicting; as suggested above, they resist incorporation within any single dominant interpretive framework. They reflect both esoteric and exoteric perspectives on Scottishness, and often encode tensions between the attitudes of

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<sup>8</sup> Perhaps the best example of this process in the case of "To a Haggis" is the widespread folk usage of the phrase "Great Chieftain o' the Puddin'-race" to refer to the dish. The degree to which the text of "To a Haggis," more than many of Burns's works, has been adopted into Scottish folk tradition results in large part from its extensive use in recitation or dramatic performance (cf. Brown 1984, 80). Almost without exception, a dramatic oral rendition of "To a Haggis" forms a core component of the tradition of the Burns Supper, an annual celebration of the poet's life and work held in hundreds of locations worldwide (cf. Chapter 4). Throughout this thesis, unless otherwise stated, I refer to the version of "To a Haggis" that appeared in the first printing of the Edinburgh edition of Burns's collected works (see Burns 1787b; cf. Appendix A), as the version on which most subsequent re-printings have been based. For earlier published versions, both of which exhibit considerable textual differences – including an entirely different final stanza – see Burns 1786 and 1787a (cf. Peel 1988).

in- and outsiders, especially those of the Scots as compared to the English. They are expressed in a wide variety of generic forms, including verbal epithets, songs and verses, narratives, visual art and customary traditions. They manifest themselves at all levels of culture, folk, popular and elite, often demonstrating “a highly complex set of direct and indirect interactions, transformations and simulations” taking place both within and between all three levels (Smith 1991, 123). Thus our cultural haggis and the diverse texts and traditions it encompasses exemplify the way in which, as Eleanor Bell suggests, “every national icon and stereotype is a complex cultural signifier” (2004, 84).

To the best of my knowledge, the present work represents the first extensive academic study of expressive culture surrounding haggis and its symbolic relationship to Scottishness.<sup>9</sup> It has therefore been tempting to try to include everything that can possibly be said about the topic. However, arguably very few foods have inspired such a large and varied corpus of expressive cultural materials, and it would be impossible, in the scope of a single thesis, to undertake a comprehensive survey of this body of data from every angle. The chapters that follow investigate three key themes within the overall corpus of expressive culture that has developed around the dish since the mid eighteenth century: 1) the emergence of haggis as a culinary stereotype of Scottishness within English cultural discourse during the mid to late 1700s; 2) the motif of the

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<sup>9</sup> Celebrity chef Clarissa Dickson Wright’s *The haggis: A little history* (1996), subsequently reissued as *The haggis* (1999) as part of the Appletree Pocket Guides series, is the only book dealing exclusively with the topic of which I am aware, and is clearly aimed primarily at a popular audience. For existing scholarly work on haggis, see, for example, Berton 2005; Cohane 1985; Fraser 2003; Livingston 1958/59; Lodge 1996; Tyrrell, Hill, and Kirkby 2007; Watson 2010; Zafar 1996.

grotesque body within the expressive cultural materials that have subsequently developed about the dish; and 3) the role of haggis within the symbolic iconography by which Scotland has traditionally represented itself to the outside world, and its subsequent entanglement in debates surrounding the authenticity and cultural legitimacy of such representations. This last theme is developed through a case study of the evolving role of haggis in the context of the Burns Supper and other public celebrations of Scottishness.

These themes have been selected on the basis of two main criteria. Firstly, I believe that they provide particularly clear illustrations of my central thesis: that expressive cultural traditions surrounding the dish encode multiple and often competing representations of and attitudes towards Scottishness on the part of both in- and outsiders. Secondly, my three key themes represent aspects of the dish's cultural history that have hitherto gone largely unnoticed within both the popular folk history of haggis and the small body of existing scholarship on the subject.<sup>10</sup> Indeed, I was unaware of the existence of much of the material analysed here when I first began work on this project. The focus and scope of my research has changed almost beyond recognition since that time, as I have continually been required to revise my own assumptions and approaches in light of newly uncovered source materials, and new perspectives on those materials, which have subsequently become central to my thinking on the topic. Moreover, this is the first major research project in which I have engaged primarily with historical source materials rather than with "real-life" collaborators. The learning curve that this

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<sup>10</sup> At the same time, my themes also provide opportunities to present new perspectives on well-known texts about the dish, such as Burns's "To a Haggis."

experience has entailed has been steep. For the first time, I found myself with no clearly defined ethnographic field site on which to concentrate my efforts. It was therefore difficult to know when to stop collecting materials, and how to make sense of the somewhat overwhelming array of data that I had amassed.

Many of what I consider to be the most exciting discoveries and significant contributions of my research have been as much the products of serendipity as of careful planning and foresight on my part. Thus, for example, an online search for information about a haggis-related satirical print that I had stumbled across on the internet auction site eBay (see Figure 3.1) eventually led to the discovery of much of the material that forms the basis of Chapter 2. From the online catalogues of prints and drawings housed at the British Museum and at Yale University's Lewis Walpole Library, I pursued an ever-expanding web of connections that suggested, in direct contrast to the folk history of the dish, that haggis had emerged as distinctively Scottish well before the publication of Burns's "To a Haggis" in 1786. Moreover, my research indicates that as a means of representing Scottishness, haggis almost certainly emerged within English cultural discourse before being adopted as an esoteric marker of identity by the Scots themselves. In the English context the dish was far from an unproblematic symbol of Scottishness, but functioned as part of a range of culinary stereotypes and metaphors that were used to stigmatise and satirise the Scots as England's closest ethnic Other. Accordingly, in Chapter 2, I trace the emergence of the dish as a culinary stereotype of Scottishness within eighteenth-century English culture, situating this process within the wider context of the tensions inherent in Anglo-Scottish relations during this period. I argue that haggis

and other culinary stereotypes of Scottishness formed a key component of the wider satirical caricature of the "beggary Scot," a caricature that was rooted in deep-seated perceptions concerning the Scots' alleged degradation and coarseness of living. The key themes within the culinary stereotypes of Scottishness that emerged during this period reflected those of this wider caricature: thus anti-Scottish food slurs focused primarily on the poverty of the Scottish diet and on conceptions of dirtiness and disease, the latter manifesting themselves in expressions of fears concerning contaminated foods.

Meanwhile, a single word in a review of a Scottish cookbook from the 1820s, again discovered largely by chance, eventually led me to recognise the significance of the grotesque body motif analysed in Chapter 3, as a prominent theme within much of the expressive culture that developed about the dish from the late 1700s onwards. The reviewer describes the act of cutting open a haggis as "paracentesis" (Review.... 1827, 48), a surgical term for the operation of making a perforation into a cavity of the body to remove fluid or gas (*OED*). Thus, the use of medical terminology in this instance exaggerates the disgusting nature of the dish by figuring the haggis as a diseased body. I began to realise that a significant proportion of expressive cultural representations of the dish feature similar grotesque body metaphors, figuring the dish primarily as a foreign body, as a diseased or contaminated body, or as a cadaver. Moreover, many accounts, particularly those of early English travellers to Scotland from the late 1700s onwards, exhibit a preoccupation with the dish's physiological effects on the bodies of its consumers. In these accounts, consuming haggis and other Scottish dishes effectively transforms the healthy body of the English eater into a grotesque body, vomiting and

defecating uncontrollably. Losing all control of its bodily functions, the English body itself is thereby rendered foreign, just as the narrators of these accounts emphasise the foreignness of the Scots through their portrayals of Scottish food and eating habits.

A further notable feature of these and other accounts of the dish is the way in which the food is often conflated with the eater. This is evidenced, for example, in the parallel between the uncontrollable bodies of the dish's English consumers and the exploding and overflowing haggises that feature prominently in such accounts. Expanding on Caroline McCracken-Flesher's analysis of the colonised Scottish body politic as grotesque (1995/96), I argue that depictions of the haggis as grotesque body and its physiological effects on its consumers reflect underlying cultural representations and contestations of Scottishness. From an English perspective, such depictions reflect a fear of contamination by the Scottish ethnic Other, a continuation of the fears expressed in the culinary stereotypes discussed in Chapter 2. By the early nineteenth century, however, similar accounts figuring the haggis as grotesque body were also regularly being produced in Scotland, suggesting a growing propensity among Scots themselves to make creative play with such stereotypical perceptions of their ethnicity, humorously exploiting English trepidation concerning Scottish cultural difference.

The inspiration for Chapter 4 was not a chance discovery but a desire to demonstrate the role of a folkloristic approach in counteracting the overwhelmingly negative conceptualisation of Scottishness and its cultural representations that has, until very recently, dominated the scholarly literature on the topic. According to this school of thought, haggis forms one element within a symbolic iconography – also including tartan,



bagpipes, mountains, castles and whisky – by which Scotland has traditionally represented itself to the outside world, and which, in turn, often forms the basis of outsiders' perceptions and representations of Scottish ethnicity (McCrone, Morris, and Kiely 1995, 50; cf. Butler 1998). As McCracken-Flesher and others have noted, this set of symbols, often referred to as *tartanry*, has typically been "maligned" by critics as "a trivializing signification of Scottishness," a "hegemonic discourse" or "mythic structure" that "present[s] a debased image of the country" and must therefore be "exorcised from our culture and from our conception of what it is to be Scottish" (McCracken-Flesher 2002, 110; McCrone 2001, 145, 131; Cameron and Scullion 1996, 52; McCrone, Morris, and Kiely 1995, 52, 54). From this perspective, haggis and the other elements of the symbolic iconography mentioned above are typically regarded as manifestations of what we might call *false Scottishness*.

It is somewhat surprising to find an example of this line of thought in the editorial of the *Bottle Imp*, the same source with which we began:

Alongside the negative, and largely exterior, stereotypes ... there is a whole mass of other "Scottish" characteristics, quick and easy shorthand ways to mark one out as Caledonian. Kilts and shortbread, haggis, golf and whisky; Nessie in a tam o' shanter [*sic*], and other Scotch myths. Walter-Scottishness. We conspire in the maintenance of a gigantic fake identity. ("Unreliable Narrator" 2009, [1])

Despite the author's earlier recognition of Scottishness as a mixture or amalgam, replete with internal conflicts, throughout the editorial the dichotomised language of authenticity versus fakery surfaces over and over again. Haggis and other elements of the symbolic iconography collectively constitute a "gigantic fake identity," a kind of "processed Scottishness" that represents to its consumers (both Scots and others) a "make-believe

Scotland," "pseudo-" and "ersatz" ("Unreliable Narrator" 2009, [1]). Thus haggis itself, rather than an apt metaphor for Scottish culture's postmodern complexities and incongruities, is reduced to a trivialising and outdated stereotype epitomising all that is inauthentic in terms of the ways in which that culture is represented.

More recent scholarship on Scottish identity, however, has begun the task of reevaluating such "received notions of tartanry" (Cameron and Scullion 1996, 45). Thus, for example, scholars of Scottish popular theatre and entertainment, such as Alasdair Cameron and Adrienne Scullion, have argued that the imagery of tartanry "is infinitely more adaptable, complicated and relevant than critics have hitherto allowed" (1996, 57), and have called for attention to "the complexities and ironies of the exchange that is involved" in its ongoing (re)creation and manipulation by both producers and consumers (Goldie 2000, 12; cf. Maloney 2003, 14-15; McCrone 2001, 141). Gerald Porter's analysis of late-seventeenth- and early-eighteenth-century English broadside ballads featuring Scottish characters, meanwhile, involves a reassessment of tartanry from a rather different perspective. With reference to its status as a so-called "invented" tradition, Porter argues that "the broadside evidence of the [eighteenth] century suggests that [the] construction of [tartanry] was not primarily a clumsy assertion of nationalism," as countless scholars of Scottishness and its cultural representations have dismissively suggested. Rather, as Porter asserts, it constituted "an attempt to resist a stereotype that had already been set up by the English popular presses" (2001, 121). As the materials discussed in Chapter 2 illustrate, a similar argument can be made concerning the construction of haggis as a symbol of Scottish culinary national identity.

Informed by these latest developments in the academic literature on Scottishness, in Chapter 4 I go on to investigate how haggis has become implicated in debates about authenticity and cultural representation within Scottish culture itself. I discuss the emic epithet of the "tartan-and-haggis" or "heather-and-haggis image" that has emerged, since roughly the beginning of the twentieth century, as a means of referring to anything that is deemed inauthentic about cultural representations of Scottishness. After briefly considering some of the reasons underlying the centrality of haggis within this vocabulary of inauthenticity, the chapter presents a case study of one particular expressive cultural tradition surrounding the dish. In this case study, I explore the dish's role in the context of the Burns Supper and other public celebrations of Scottishness, and especially the custom of "piping in the haggis" at such events. I trace the precursors of this custom from the beginnings of the Burns Supper tradition in the early nineteenth century; its emergence among Scottish diaspora communities in the mid to late 1800s; and finally the debates surrounding its authenticity and cultural legitimacy as a means of representing Scottishness, from the 1930s onwards. The chapter concludes by arguing for more critical attention to be paid to such customs and to the debates that they engender, as a corrective to the tendency among scholars to dismiss such cultural productions as inauthentic, trivialising and false representations of Scottishness.

Particularly pertinent to my analysis in Chapter 4 and throughout this thesis is McCracken-Flesher's work on the discourse of tartanry, and in particular her notion of Scottishness as contention. Undertaking a more positive rewriting of the "invention of

tradition" analysis of tartanry advanced by scholars such as Hugh Trevor-Roper (1983; 2009), McCracken-Flesher argues that:

for Scotland the myth of tartanry has worked to maintain the notion of the nation while energizing its difference. The very delimitation of kiltification has required Scots to self-identify through and against the fashion of the nation thus enacting multiplicity as the formative phenomenon of a unified Scottishness. Tartan is the site of the contention that is Scotland. (2002, 113)

As this thesis aims to demonstrate, haggis represents an ideal case study for further exploring this notion of Scottishness as contention, precisely because it is much more obviously problematic as a symbol than the other, more easily romanticised elements of the iconography of tartanry. Its problematic nature is embodied in its very appearance, in the much-discussed dubiousness of its contents, and even in the sound of its name, all of which have contributed to the "ridicule and endless bad jokes" that, as Clarissa Dickson Wright dismissively notes, have come to surround the dish (1996, 7). This study argues, however, that it is in large part its very ambivalence and even ridiculousness as a symbol – its ability to be simultaneously "good," "bad" and "ridiculous to think," in George Lewis's terms (2000, 83; cf. Lévi-Strauss 1969, 87) – that makes haggis so flexible, complex and powerful a cultural signifier.

## Chapter 2. Sawney's Kitchen Nightmares: Anglo-Scottish Relations and the Emergence of Haggis as a Culinary Stereotype<sup>1</sup>

Precisely when and how haggis came to be regarded as “uniquely and idiosyncratically Scot[tish]” (Zafar 1996, 142) is a matter of some debate, and, until now, remarkably little serious scholarship. Most commentators agree that the dish’s symbolic association with Scottishness was established sometime during the 1700s. Yet the process by which this took place: the perspective from which the association was constructed, its underlying purpose, the means by which it was disseminated, and its relationship to the wider cultural context of eighteenth-century Britain have been almost completely ignored.<sup>2</sup> A general lack of attention to contemporary source materials, or, more precisely, an over-reliance on the same few sources, often repeatedly misquoted without verification or contextualisation, has resulted in the perpetuation of a widely accepted folk history of the dish and its rise to prominence as a symbol of Scottishness.

Above all, this folk history has tended to assume that the Scottish poet Robert Burns, in penning his famous mock-heroic address “To a Haggis” in 1786, more or less

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<sup>1</sup> The title of this chapter is borrowed from that of the popular British reality television series *Ramsay's kitchen nightmares*, starring foulmouthed and fiery-tempered Scottish celebrity chef Gordon Ramsay, which originally aired on Channel 4 from 2004 to 2011 (see Channel 4 2011). *Sawney* is a Scotticised form of the name Sandy (a diminutive of Alexander) and was used as a generic nickname for the Scots during the period discussed in this chapter.

<sup>2</sup> One notable exception is the brief discussion of these issues in a recent article by Alex Tyrrell, Patricia Hill, and Diane Kirkby (2007).

single-handedly established the symbolic connection between haggis and Scottishness, in the process effectively positioning the dish as the iconic lynchpin of a new sense of Scottish culinary national identity (see Appendix A; cf. Zafar 1996).<sup>3</sup> UK celebrity chef Clarissa Dickson Wright, for instance, opines that “it is undoubtedly Robert Burns who, in immortalising the haggis in his powerful paean to the common man, has identified it so firmly with Scotland” (1999, 56). Mary Ellen Cohane states simply that “[h]aggis, which was traditionally a homely meal in Scotland, became elevated to a symbol of Scottish nationalism by the words of Robert Burns” (1985, 24). Indeed, so prevalent is this folk history that scholars have, on occasion, failed to question it in spite of compelling contemporary evidence that clearly contradicts this basic assumption. Thus food historian Catherine Brown writes that “until Burns there was nothing particularly Scottish about [haggis]” (1998, 248), despite elsewhere acknowledging the existence of earlier sources specifically referring to the dish as “Scotch” (e.g., [Glasse] 1758; cf. Brown 2009).

Even those commentators who date the emergence of the dish’s association with Scottishness prior to the publication of Burns’s “To a Haggis” do so with little apparent reference to contemporary source materials. Alan Harrison, for example, states that haggis was “[t]aken to be a distinctly Scottish dish from the 1750’s [*sic*] onwards,” but cites no scholarly authority or contemporary evidence in support of this assertion (1984, 16). Other sources, most notably the *OED*, link the emergence of the symbolic

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<sup>3</sup> For an alternative reading of “To a Haggis,” see Chapter 3; and for its cultural influence, see Chapter 4.

connection between haggis and Scottishness to a decline in its consumption in England. Thus the *OED* entry for *haggis* states that the dish is “now considered specially Scotch [*sic*], but [was] a popular dish in English cookery down to the beginning of the 18th c[entury].”<sup>4</sup> Similarly, in her book *A Caledonian feast*, Annette Hope writes that although haggis is now “a curiosity outside Scotland, ... [i]t was not always so, for in one form or another it was eaten in England until about the 18th century” (1987, 120). This argument ignores the fact that haggis was well known in parts of England, at least, throughout the nineteenth century, despite its increasing symbolic association with Scottishness (see, e.g., Brockett 1825, 88; Jackson 1879, 192; Robertson 1890, 63). As this circumstance indicates, the construction of the dish as distinctively Scottish had relatively little to do with actual patterns of consumption, but rather was based primarily on perception and cultural representation.

This chapter argues that in order to trace the emergence of the dish’s symbolic association with Scottishness, it is necessary to look beyond the expressive culture of eighteenth-century Scotland itself, and to focus instead on that of England during the same period. Burns’s profound and lasting cultural legacy undoubtedly played a hugely significant role in the construction of haggis as a symbol of Scottish culinary national identity from the late 1700s onwards. In particular, the emergence of the tradition of the Burns Supper in the early nineteenth century, as an annual celebration of the poet’s life

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<sup>4</sup> The wording of this statement has not been revised since the publication of the relevant volume of James Murray’s *New English dictionary* (the predecessor of the *OED*) in 1901, hence the antiquated use of the word “Scotch” for Scottish (see Murray 1884-1928).

and work and of "the Scotland he represents" (Brown 1984, 138), brought about a transformation in the dish's status from relatively low prestige, everyday fare to that of a festival food (cf. Chapter 4). The materials discussed in this chapter, however, clearly demonstrate that within English cultural discourse the dish was increasingly portrayed as distinctively Scottish from at least the mid 1700s: several decades before the publication of Burns's "To a Haggis."<sup>5</sup> Around this time, the dish underwent a shift in signification from an ethnically unmarked category to one that was increasingly labelled as "Scotch." From the Middle Ages onwards, recipes for the dish had appeared in English cookery manuscripts and early printed cookbooks described simply as *haggis* (in a wide range of variant spellings), without any indication that it might have been associated with a

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<sup>5</sup> Only two possible allusions have been located prior to 1700, both of which are too tenuous to carry much interpretive significance. The first is the appearance of a character named Toby Haggise in Ben Jonson's play *Bartholomew fair* (orig. perf. 1614; orig. pub. 1640), who, although not explicitly identified as such, is almost certainly Scottish (Jonson 1640; cf. Bartley 1954, 83). In his work on the development of the stage Scotsman as a stock character in British drama, J. O. Bartley rejects the possibility that this character's surname might have been sufficient to identify him to contemporary audiences as Scottish, on the basis that "the present association between Scots and haggis had not then developed" (1954, 83; cf. Bartley 1943, 280). Bartley is unimaginative in his reliance on dictionary sources (cf. Murray 1884-1928; Wright 1898-1905) in dating the emergence of the association between haggis and Scottishness. Nonetheless, the fact that he uncovers no further references to the dish in dramatic portrayals of Scottish characters until the 1770s makes any attempt to situate Jonson's Toby Haggise as part of a gradually evolving pattern of association decidedly problematic. Secondly, the diary of Sir Thomas Isham of Lamport in Northamptonshire, composed in Latin during the early 1670s, includes a reference to a "Scotch" dish that may or may not be haggis. In an entry dated March 7, 1672, Isham records the visit of a Mr [John] Eyre, who, he writes, "spent the night with us, and ... [t]he next day ... made a Scotch pudding" [*Dominus Erius nobiscum pernactavit, et ... deique sequenti fartum Scoticum fecit*] (Isham 1971, 91, 249). Sir Gyles Isham, editing the diary for publication, notes that biographical information "points to a north-country origin for John Eyre" (though by this he appears to mean northern English rather than Scottish). He further suggests that "'Scotch pudding' sounds like haggis" (90), but unfortunately there is nothing in the text itself to confirm this.



particular region or ethnic group (cf. Hieatt and Nutter 2006, 48; Livingston 1958/59; Balic 2007). Indeed, an oft-quoted passage from the second edition of Gervase Markham's *English huswife*, published in 1623, appears to suggest that haggis enjoyed widespread popularity in England at that time. As Markham writes: "small Oate-meale mixed with blood, and the liver of either Sheepe, Calfe or Swine, maketh that pudden which is called the Haggas or Haggus, of whose goodnesse it is in vaine to boast, because there is hardly to bee found a man that doth not affect them" (1623, 22). From the late 1750s, however, English cookery writers such as Hannah Glasse and Charlotte Mason began to publish recipes for the dish under the title "Scotch Haggass" ([Glasse] 1758, 376, emphasis added; cf. Mason 1777, 158).<sup>6</sup>

Other English references to the dish from this period explicitly classify it as a food that is commonly eaten by the Scots, and treat *haggis* as a term in need of explication to English audiences. The editor of the 1759 edition of the *Memoirs* of Robert Carey, first Earl of Monmouth, for example, deems it necessary to provide his presumably predominantly English readership with an explanatory gloss on the word

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<sup>6</sup> Glasse first includes a recipe for "Scotch Haggass" in an appendix to the sixth edition of her popular *Art of cookery* (1758). As Virginia Maclean notes, this work was one of the most influential eighteenth-century English cookbooks, and went through multiple editions between 1747 and 1843, around which time it was overtaken in popularity by the work of Isabella Beeton (1981, 60). The earliest Scottish cookbook to include a recipe for haggis in any form, meanwhile, appears to have been Susanna MacIver's *Cookery, and pastry*, first published in Edinburgh in 1773. Interestingly, MacIver includes two different haggis recipes, the first for "A good Scots Haggies" and the second for "A Lamb's Haggies" (1774, 63-64). While the former is essentially the haggis known in Scotland today, the latter bears a much closer resemblance to some of the haggis recipes that featured in earlier English culinary manuscripts and cookbooks (cf. Hieatt and Nutter 2006, 48; Livingston 1958/59; Balic 2007).

*haggis* as it appears in Carey's text, originally composed in the early 1600s (cf. Mares 1972, xxii). He includes a footnote explaining that "the *haggass* is a kind of pudding" consisting of "the belly of a sheep, filled with minced meat, blood, onions and herbs," adding that it is "a dish much eaten by the common people of Scotland" (Carey 1759, 125).<sup>7</sup> A decade later, the entry on Scotland in William Guthrie's encyclopaedic *New geographical, historical, and commercial grammar* includes "the hoggice" (i.e., *haggis*) in its list of "antient [*sic*] Scotch dishes" of which the natives are said to be especially fond (Guthrie 1770, 72).<sup>8</sup> That the word *haggis* itself was increasingly perceived as a dialect term is similarly indicated by its inclusion in John Sinclair's *Observations on the Scottish dialect* (1782), in which "*a haggess*" is described as "[a] dish not, in former times, belonging exclusively to Scotland" (152-53, emphasis added). And in 1787 – a matter of months after the initial publication of Burns's "To a Haggis" – Francis Grose's *Provincial glossary* lists *haggis*, or *haggass*, as a term belonging specifically to Northumbria and to Scotland (n. pag.).<sup>9</sup>

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<sup>7</sup> By way of contrast, John Cuthbertson argues that the absence of an explanatory gloss on *haggis* in Monmouth's original manuscript suggests that the dish was familiar in England in the early 1600s (1886, 195-96; cf. Markham 1623, 22), though this could simply reflect the fact that the manuscript was not intended for publication. Unfortunately, no known copies of the manuscript remain (cf. Mares 1972, xxxv), though Cuthbertson's remark suggests that he had seen one.

<sup>8</sup> The other dishes listed are "the sheep's-head singed, the fish in sauce, the chicken broth, and minced collops [i.e., slices of meat]." Guthrie tactfully observes that "[t]hese dishes, in their original dressing, were savoury and nutritive for keen appetites," but adds that "the modern improvements that have been made in the Scotch cookery, have rendered them agreeable to the most delicate palates" (1770, 72).

<sup>9</sup> The most famous English dictionary of this period, Samuel Johnson's *Dictionary of the English language*, is (somewhat surprisingly) less decisive concerning

Through a gradual process of othering, haggis was thus increasingly identified as a Scottish (and therefore foreign) dish within English cultural discourse from the mid 1700s onwards. Furthermore, the dish was being used with increasing regularity as a means of stereotypically representing Scottishness from an exoteric, English perspective (cf. Jansen 1965). That haggis had become an instantly recognisable culinary shorthand for Scottishness by the mid 1700s is evident from an account of the preparations for a holiday feast depicted in *The reverie; or, a flight to the paradise of fools* (1762). When the question arises of what to include on the menu for the feast, the narrator describes how “every one ... roar[ed] out at once for some particular dish, either that it was his trade to provide, or which he was fond of himself.” The butcher, poulterer and fishmonger request beef, fowls and fish, respectively; what follows provides a snapshot of eighteenth-century food-based ethnic stereotypes:

- “A ragou,”—squeaked a Frenchman,
  - “Pickled herrings,[”]—belched Mynheer [i.e., a Dutchman].
  - “Potatoes,”—cried an Irishman.
  - “An haggis,”—said a Scot.
  - “Leek-pottage,”—sputtered Taffy [i.e., a Welshman].
- (*Reverie*.... 1762, 185)

A similar list of food-based stereotypes is enumerated in the *Memoirs* of English theatre manager Tate Wilkinson: “John Bull loves beef and pudding, the Frenchman soup, the

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the dish’s Scottish provenance. In his first edition Johnson draws attention to a specifically Scottish variant of haggis, noting that “[i]n Scotland it is commonly made in a sheep’s maw, of the entrails of the same animal, cut small, with suet and spices,” in contrast to the pork that he implies is generally used in England (1755, 1: n. pag.). Subsequent editions, however, omit this information, defining the dish simply as “[a] mass of meat, generally pork chopped, and inclosed in a membrane” (see Johnson 1773, 1: n. pag.).

Dutchman butter, the Scotchman haggess, the Irishman potatoes, Welchman leeks and kid, the Italian macaroni, and a Turk (what we find poison) laudanum [tincture of opium]" (1791, 1:172). Indeed, a further comment in Wilkinson's *Memoirs* suggests that many English people during the late 1700s believed that the Scots lived on little else but haggis. Remarking on the "rapid strides towards improvement" recently evidenced by the construction of Edinburgh's New Town, Wilkinson reflects that "[t]his description will make a narrow-minded Cockney stare who thinks green peas were never seen in Scotland, and supposes all the inhabitants live on barley-broth, haggass, and crowdy" (1790, 3:212-13). Crowdy (or crowdie), a mixture made from raw oatmeal and water (CSD), was another dish frequently used as a culinary shorthand for Scottishness during this period. Significantly, we see here an association between the alleged poverty and monotony of the Scottish diet and the perception of Scotland itself as "a dirty, mean place" (Wilkinson 1790, 3:213).

Similarly, a satirical print entitled *Scotch amusements* (1768) (BM Satires 4237) features a pair of Scotsmen, clad in stereotypically Scottish tartan trews and bonnets, supping from a "Scots Haggist [*sic*] Kettle" (see Figure 2.1). This example not only illustrates the growing stereotypical association between Scots and haggis, but also the way in which the otherness of the Scots could be emphasised by exoticising their food and eating habits. As Frederic Stephens observes (1870-83, 4:481), the artist (purposely or otherwise) has combined two different Scottish dishes in this scene, thereby exaggerating the strangeness of both. The two dishes are haggis and singed sheep's head, the latter prepared by boiling the singed head in a broth together with the trotters, as well



Figure 2.1. Detail from *Scotch amusements* (1768) (BM Satires 4237), showing a Scotsman expressing his wish that the sheep's heads floating in his "Scots Haggist Kettle" were really Englishmen's heads (© Trustees of the British Museum)

as vegetables such as carrots, turnips and onions (McNeill 1976, 184). Like haggis and crowdie, singed sheep's head appears to have emerged as a distinctively Scottish dish within English cultural discourse during this period and formed a popular subject for the artists of anti-Scottish satirical prints. In this instance, whole sheep's heads are depicted floating rather gruesomely in the giant "Haggist Kettle." A tartan-clad woman on hands and knees is blowing on the fire under the cauldron, presumably intended to highlight the primitive nature of Scottish cooking methods. Meanwhile, one of the men is exclaiming: "These are brae [*fine*] Sheepsheads & make Muckle gued [*lots of good*] broth," to which his companion replies: "An [*if*] they were all English Mens heads I woud no [*not*] grudge a louse."<sup>10</sup> This conversation not only references the Scots' alleged anti-Englishness and "extreme nationality" (Langford 2005, 155) but, with its suggestion of cannibalism, positions them as the ultimate culinary Other.

This last example illustrates particularly clearly how haggis and other culinary stereotypes of Scottishness that emerged during this period could be used not simply as a convenient ethnic shorthand but as a means of encoding particular ideas about and attitudes towards Scottishness as constructed from an English perspective. In fact, the evolution of these culinary stereotypes within the expressive culture of eighteenth-century England can be interpreted as one manifestation of a wider cultural phenomenon

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<sup>10</sup> In keeping with their reputation for unintelligibility within English cultural discourse, the Scots depicted in the satires of this period usually speak in a mixture of English and an impersonated Scots vernacular (Brewer 1973, 19; Atherton 1974, 211); translations of words whose meanings may be unclear are given in brackets in all quotations. Non-standard spellings and punctuation are commonplace and are reproduced exactly as they are in the originals. Similarly, unless otherwise noted, italics in all quotations from the satires are in the originals.

that can be seen at work at least as far back as the early 1600s. As I argue in the following section, increasing contact between the Scots and the English from the beginning of the seventeenth century resulted in the development of particular English notions of “what constituted a Scot” (Waurechen 2011, i), constructed and disseminated within English cultural discourse. Prominent among the stereotypical formulations of Scottishness that evolved during this period was the caricature of the Scot as primitive barbarian, a caricature based on deep-seated perceptions concerning the Scots’ alleged degradation and coarseness of living (Atherton 1974, 210; cf. Rounce 2005, 36, 40; Rackwitz 2007, 115-30). Unlike other English stereotypes of Scottishness that emerged during this period (including the Scot as careerist, as intellectual, as sycophant, and as “mercenary calculator”<sup>11</sup>), the stereotype of the “beggarly Scot” was based primarily on notions of economic and social backwardness rather than on perceived character traits. It is within this particular formulation of Scottishness that culinary stereotypes therefore played the most significant role. In addition, as will be discussed later in this chapter, perceptions concerning the poverty of the Scottish diet could be used figuratively to account for social phenomena such as the allegedly excessive influx of Scottish immigrants to the South, and as a means of satirising alleged national character traits such as meanness. Thus the evolution of haggis and other culinary stereotypes of Scottishness must be interpreted in the wider context of the tensions inherent in seventeenth- and eighteenth-century Anglo-Scottish relations and the exoteric

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<sup>11</sup> On the development of these and other stereotypes of Scottishness during the same period, see, for example, Langford 2005; Colley 2003, 122; Bartley 1943, 279-84; Bartley 1954.

representations of Scottishness that developed within English cultural discourse as a result.

### **Anglo-Scottish Relations and the Evolution of the Stereotype Scot**

According to Herbert Atherton, "[a]n unsympathetic stereotype of the Scot was well fixed in the minds of eighteenth-century Englishmen," one of several national stereotypes that had begun to develop during the 1600s and that also included, most notably, the stereotypical Frenchman, Spaniard and Dutchman (1974, 89, 85). Yet Paul Langford suggests that "[w]ith the sole exception of the French, no other nationality was so despised and derided in the vast array of caricatures turned out by the London press" during the 1700s as were the Scots (2005, 148). In common with the other national stereotypes that developed concurrently, the stereotype Scot reflected, in part, the emergence of modern English nationalism during this period; as Atherton writes, such stereotypes "became, in a negative way, expressions of [the Englishman's] own sense of Englishness" (1974, 85). However, the evolution of the stereotype Scot can only be fully understood when interpreted in the context of the complex tensions that characterised Anglo-Scottish relations throughout the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries.

Anti-Scottish sentiment in seventeenth- and eighteenth-century England was one legacy of a long history of mutual antagonism and conflict between the two countries that had lasted since at least the eleventh century (Colley 2003, 117). Prior to 1600, however, non-military contact between the Scots and the English was relatively rare, and it was



only after interaction became more frequent and less openly hostile during the seventeenth century that the Scots became familiar enough to caricature. The changing nature of the relationship between the two nations resulted in large part from the regal union of 1603, when, following the death without issue of England's Queen Elizabeth I, her cousin James VI of Scotland also inherited the English throne as James I, thereby uniting the two kingdoms under one monarch. When James relocated from Edinburgh to London, he was accompanied by significant numbers of Scottish courtiers and advisors, so that, for the first time, Scots enjoyed a highly visible and influential presence in the English capital, a circumstance that many in the South regarded as an invasion of a new, non-military kind (cf. Lamont 1997, 344). Sarah Waurechen summarises the complexities of Anglo-Scottish relations during the seventeenth century thus:

England and Scotland shared a protestant faith, but their churches upheld divergent disciplinary practices; they shared a language, but strong dialects persisted; they shared a monarch, but no legislative, religious or legal institutions; and they shared an island, but there were vast disparities in the quality and quantity of land in each kingdom, as well as the levels of trade and urban development. England was stronger, bigger, and richer, but the Scots were stubbornly protective of their sovereignty and aggressively defensive of their Kirk, and so there was an ongoing game of religious, cultural, and political tug-of-war throughout the century. (2011, 1-2)

The origins of the stereotype Scot within English cultural discourse can be traced to what Martin Rackwitz describes as a new genre of "fictitious, satirical and often highly abusive accounts" of Scotland that emerged during the early years of the regal union (2007, 115). Rackwitz suggests that the earliest and most influential of these accounts, usually referred to under the title *A perfect description of the people and country of Scotland* (1617), can be interpreted as a direct response to the ascension of a Scottish

monarch to the English throne and to the allegedly excessive preference shown to his Scottish followers at court (2007, 116). It takes the form of a letter ostensibly written to an English correspondent by a member of James's entourage during his official visit to Scotland in 1617, and is usually attributed to Sir Anthony Weldon (Rackwitz 2007, 115; cf. Marshall and Kelsey 2008).<sup>12</sup> In recounting his supposed experiences in Scotland, the writer focuses at length on the Scots' "poverty, bigotry, and foolish traditions" (Marshall and Kelsey 2008). Accounts such as the *Perfect description* remained popular throughout the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, with the same key texts reprinted numerous times in various forms and plagiarised extensively by subsequent authors (Rackwitz 2007, 115; cf. Waurechen 2011, 3-11).

The publication histories of such accounts suggest that their marketability increased whenever the relationship between the two nations was at its most turbulent. Rackwitz, for example, traces the history of another key text belonging to this genre, Thomas Kirke's scathing *Modern account of Scotland* (1679).<sup>13</sup> He points out that the various reprints of Kirke's work all coincided with "times of extraordinary tension

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<sup>12</sup> Joseph Marshall and Sean Kelsey note that there are "many surviving manuscript versions" of this account, of which two are included in the Tanner Collection at the Bodleian Library (MS Tanner 74, no. 42, ff. 97r-98r; and MS Tanner 237, no. 8, ff. 64r-67v). The earliest surviving printed edition was published in 1626, under the title *A description of Scotland*, and attributed to one Dr. Corbett (Corbett 1626; cf. Marshall and Kelsey 2008). Versions of the account were reprinted several times during the 1640s and 1650s, some of them anonymously, and others attributed to James Howell. Marshall and Kelsey argue that Weldon was probably not associated with this account until after 1650. For an extensive discussion of this account and the representations of Scottishness it contains, see Waurechen 2011, 3-11.

<sup>13</sup> Both Rackwitz and P. Hume Brown suggest that Kirke almost certainly used the *Perfect description*.... (1617) as a model (Rackwitz 2007, 117; Brown 1970, 251).

between England and Scotland,” arguing that this timing illustrates “the uneasy relationship between both countries and the deep mistrust of the English for the Scots until far into the eighteenth century” (2007, 121).<sup>14</sup> Undertaking a similar analysis of the *Perfect description*.... (1617), Waurechen interprets such satires not simply as “uncomplicated Scots-bashing,” but as “part of a broader need to redefine or reinforce English identity through the complex sounding-board that Scotland could create in a century when political amalgamation, among other crises, threatened to undermine it” (2011, 6, 11).<sup>15</sup>

Such texts presented grossly exaggerated accounts that portrayed the Scots as “uncivilised barbarians” (Rackwitz 2007, 120; cf. Langford 2005, 167), dwelling at length and in great detail on their degradation and coarseness of living, and reserving particular mockery for their lack of personal hygiene and the alleged ubiquity of “the itch,” or scabies. In so doing, they set the scene for the crystallisation of the stereotype of the “beggarly Scot” during the eighteenth century. Despite the popularity of such satirical and abusive accounts, English expressive cultural representations of Scottishness remained “highly unstable” throughout the 1600s (Porter 2001, 117; cf. Bartley 1954,

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<sup>14</sup> The dates of the reprints were 1699, 1708, 1714 and 1746, roughly coinciding, respectively, with the disastrous collapse of the planned Scottish trading colony at Darien on the isthmus of Panama in the late 1690s; the union of the Scottish and English parliaments in 1707 and the abortive Jacobite invasion of 1708; the Hanoverian succession in 1714; and the Jacobite Rising of 1745–46 (see Rackwitz 2007, 121).

<sup>15</sup> Other accounts belonging to this genre include such satirical and fictitious letters and travel accounts about Scotland as E. B.’s *Description of Scotland, and its inhabitants* (B. 1705) and *John English’s travels through Scotland* (English [ca. 1760?]) (cf. Rackwitz 2007, 122–27).

80),<sup>16</sup> but by the turn of the eighteenth century the stereotype was beginning to acquire greater prominence and fixity of form. This development was no doubt precipitated, in large part, by the heightened tensions surrounding the negotiation of the union of the Scottish and English parliaments in 1707, which brought Britain into being as a political entity, and by the renewed influx of Scots to England in the years that followed. In his work on depictions of Scottish characters in English broadside ballads, for example, Gerald Porter writes that "with very few exceptions, the London ballads of the new century treat Scotland as a newly defeated and colonized nation and Scots as contemptible and boorish fools" (2001, 123). By way of illustration, he quotes a ballad entitled "The curse of Scotland," probably dating from around the time of the parliamentary union, which describes the Scots as "a mangy race" and Scotland as "a nasty, mangy, lousy, itchy, dirty place" (Curse of Scotland [ca. 1707?]; cf. Holloway and Black 1975, 79-80). As Porter comments, "all the elements of the diminished other are now in place": the Scots are portrayed as "undifferentiated," "physically offensive," "threatening to outsiders" and, "above all, ... more brute than human" (2001, 124).

Anglo-Scottish tensions reached a further climax during the Jacobite Rising of 1745-46, when a predominantly Scottish Highland army led by Charles Edward Stuart, with backing from France, marched on England in an ultimately doomed attempt to

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<sup>16</sup> As Gerald Porter discusses, such representations also had unclear borders, in the sense that the characteristics associated with the Scots often bore close similarities to those used to depict persons from northern England (2001, 117; cf. Bartley 1954, 79). Bartley, meanwhile, states that throughout much of the 1600s theatrical portrayals of Scottish characters remained "nebulous and ill-defined," and exhibited few if any signs of conventionality until well into the eighteenth century (1954, 80, 147).

restore the Stuart dynasty to the British throne (Colley 2003, 117). With memories of the Jacobite invasion still fresh in the national consciousness, English Scottophobia was fuelled by the elevation of unprecedented numbers of Scots to positions of influence in the British state from mid-century (cf. Tyrrell, Hill, and Kirkby 2007, 48), and especially by the appointment of John Stuart, third Earl of Bute, as Britain's first Scottish-born Prime Minister in 1762. Lord Bute was one of the most disliked and virulently satirised figures in eighteenth-century British politics, a circumstance that stemmed as much from his nationality as from his policies and style of government (cf. Brewer 1973; Colley 2003, 117-32; Lamont 1997; Langford 2005; Rounce 2003; Rounce 2005; Schweizer 1974; Schweizer 1997; Stephens 1870-83, 4:xcviii-ciii). Like James VI and I before him, his unpopularity was exacerbated by allegations that he was in the habit of showing disproportionate favour to his Scottish supporters when it came to dispensing his patronage.

It is no coincidence, then, that this period saw an unprecedented proliferation of anti-Scottish satirical materials within English popular culture. In total, more than four hundred satirical prints were produced on the subject of Lord Bute alone during his period of influence (George 1959, 1:121), many of which played on his Scottishness. In so doing, this corpus of material played a significant role in the crystallisation of the "beggarly Scot" as a stock character within British cultural discourse.<sup>17</sup> As will be shown

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<sup>17</sup> The legacy of Bute's reputation manifested itself as recently as March 2010, when Alistair Darling, Scottish-born Chancellor of the Exchequer in Britain's Labour government, introduced a ten-pence tax increase on cider. Simon Russell of the National Association of Cider Makers was quoted in the London *Times* as stating that: "They burnt effigies of Lord Bute across the West Country in 1763 when he introduced a tax on cider."

in the following section, the large corpus of anti-Scottish satirical prints and verse produced, mostly in London, during the second half of the eighteenth century offers a particularly revealing insight into the role of dietary stereotypes within the overall caricature of the “beggarly Scot,” as well as the underlying conceptualisations of Scottishness on which such stereotypes were based. Such prints were typically sold singly by publishers and booksellers, but copies were often incorporated into book-length collections, whose titles clearly reflect their Scottophobic content. They include *The British antidote to Caledonian poison* [1763/64]; *A political and satirical history: Displaying the unhappy influence of Scotch prevalency* [1763?]; and *The Scots scourge* [1765?]. It should be noted, however, that in contrast to street literature such as the broadside ballads discussed by Porter, such prints were aimed at a more educated and economically advantaged class.<sup>18</sup> Alex Tyrrell, Patricia Hill, and Diane Kirkby interpret the satires of this period as part of “the cut and thrust of a debate that was conducted with a eye to its jocular qualities” (2007, 48). Nonetheless, they emphasise that “there was no doubt as to the reality of the hostility that was directed against the Scots” during this period, an interpretation strongly supported by the materials discussed below.

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*He was a dour Scotsman, too.* I wouldn't want to be Alistair Darling if he dared venture to Bristol” (A word to the wise 2010, emphasis added; thanks to Joan Fraser for this reference).

<sup>18</sup> For studies of the prints and the extent of their popularity and influence, see, for example, Baker 1982; Donald 1996; Donald 2000; George 1959; George 1967; Nicholson 1996.

### Eating, Identity and Otherness: The Role of Diet in the Evolving Stereotype of the Beggarly Scot

As Deborah Lupton writes: "Food and culinary practices ... hold an extraordinary power in defining the boundaries between 'us' and 'them,'" "marking differences between cultures" and thereby "serving to strengthen group identity" (1996, 26, 25). In the introduction to their influential work on ethnic and regional foodways in the United States, Linda Keller Brown and Kay Mussell observe, for example, that those in the mainstream "frequently use foodways as a factor in the identification of subcultural groups and find in the traditional dishes and ingredients of 'others' who eat differently from themselves a set of convenient ways to categorize ethnic and regional character" (1984, 3-4). Sean Redmond writes that such processes of identification typically involve the establishment of "'us' and 'them' binaries in which difference is constructed out of what the Other eats, how they eat, and how they prepare and handle food" (2009, [3]).

Within the expressive culture of a given group, such exoteric perceptions of another group's foodways often find expression in the form of what folklorists refer to as *blasons populaires*, that is, folkloric forms based on stereotypes held by one group about another (see, e.g., Thomas 1976; Widdowson 1981; Turner 1987; Bennett 1990). Irving Lewis Allen uses the term *food slurs* to refer specifically to food-related *blasons populaires* (1983b, 28). Such food slurs find expression in a variety of generic forms, from food-based epithets used as nicknames for ethnic groups, to narrative forms such as food-related ethnic jokes and contemporary legends. Allen identifies "stereotyped

notions about national dishes and beverages and about dietary preferences and habits" as one of six key traits that may form the subject of aggressive verbal epithets directed against the members of an ethnic group by those of a different ethnicity (1983a, 82). As Christie Davies writes in his work on ethnic humour:

Naturally such an obvious, visible, and fundamental difference between the behavior of two ethnic groups as a difference in eating habits can give rise to a large number of ethnic jokes. In such cases the members of any one ethnic group tell jokes at the expense of a neighboring group which is believed, rightly or wrongly, to eat different, tabooed, or inferior food. Indeed, the comic nicknames of ethnic groups are often derived from a forbidden, despised, or even merely characteristic food which that group is believed habitually to consume. (1990, 276)

Thus, for example, Mario Montaña explores how racist attitudes held by Texan Anglos towards Mexicans have been symbolically encoded in and transmitted through food slurs as a means of stigmatising the Other and encoding intergroup relations (1997, 50, 52; cf. Allen 1983b). Montaña suggests that "[a]side from diet, no other aspect of Mexican culture seems to have caught the fancy of the Anglo coiner of derogatory terms for Mexicans"; such terms include "pepper belly," "taco choker," "frijole guzzler," and "chili picker" (1997, 52). In addition to ethnic jokes, meanwhile, the cycle of contemporary legends dealing with the serving of tabooed foods such as cat- or dog-meat at Chinese and other ethnic restaurants, or with immigrant groups whose members are alleged to kill the pets of local residents for food, are examples of food slurs expressed in narrative form (e.g., Baer 1982; Buchan 1992; Domowitz 1979; Klintberg 1981). In such narratives, as David Buchan writes, the consumption of tabooed foods "operates as a demarcating symbol of the differentness" or "cultural otherness" of the ethnic group whose eating habits form the target of the slur (1992, 96). In a similar way, as Tyrrell, Hill, and Kirkby



observe, “references to diet ... as pejorative statements of nationality” directed against the Scots had become “a commonplace of contemporary satire” in England by the middle of the eighteenth century (2007, 48).

Many ethnic food slurs are based around two key themes: the actual or perceived poverty of the stigmatised group, as reflected in its diet; and perceptions or expressions of fears concerning contaminated foods. In the remainder of this chapter, and in the chapter that follows, I discuss how these two themes are manifested in the anti-Scottish food slurs that emerged within seventeenth- and eighteenth-century English cultural discourse, as part of the wider caricature of the “beggarly Scot.” The materials analysed here also exemplify the way in which, as Michael Owen Jones points out, “[f]ood-based slurs not only denigrate others but also dehumanize the Other,” functioning as a means to classify those who eat differently from ourselves as somehow “less than human” (Jones 2007, 136; Montaña 1997, 52).<sup>19</sup> The motif of dehumanisation is so prominent within the corpus of anti-Scottish food slurs from this period that rather than dealing with it as a separate theme, it will be mentioned as and when it manifests itself in the examples discussed below.

Davies (1990) writes that food-based ethnic humour is typically directed against a group whose foodways are considered to be – or are represented as – inferior and lacking in prestige in comparison to those of the mainstream. As he explains: “By implication

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<sup>19</sup> As examples, Jones cites such ethnic epithets as *krauts* for Germans, *frogs* for the French, *limeys* for the English and *fish heads* for the Indochinese (2007, 136). On the dehumanisation of the Scots in the satires of this period more generally, see, for example, Atherton 1974, 210-13; Rounce 2005, 23-36.

those who eat comic inferior food are themselves comically inferior. Their meager diet reveals either their lack of economic and other resources or a deficient ability to choose between 'good' and 'inferior' food," or both (1990, 283). Davies's discussion of English jokes about the Welsh love of cheese, which date back to at least the fourteenth century and are thus among the earliest known examples of this type of humour, reveals significant parallels with the food slurs that were subsequently directed against the Scots. As he describes:

The social reality behind these jokes was that the Welsh were a poor pastoral people, living in a barren and mountainous country, who consumed their own dairy produce but who could not afford to eat much meat. Indeed it was customary for the Welsh to send their cattle to neighboring England for fattening, and much of the meat thus raised was consumed by the richer inhabitants of that country after the cattle had been driven across the border. Thus the Welsh ate cheese at a time when people of an equivalent relative social status in England would have eaten meat and would have regarded dairy produce such as cheese as "food appertinent onelie to the inferiour sort." (1990, 286-87; cf. Davies 1999)

As this example illustrates, the jokes' underlying commentary on "the backwardness of the Welsh economy and the poverty of the Welsh people" was constructed in opposition to the prominence of meat – and especially beef – within the English diet, reflecting the typical European emphasis on "the supremacy of meat as an index, a symbol of wealth, luxury, privilege, and power" (Davies 1990, 287, 293; cf. Fiddes 1991). A similar point can be made about the anti-French food slurs that developed within English expressive culture in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. Although the French were typically derided for the excessive luxuriousness and wastefulness of their cuisine, rather than its poverty, they were nonetheless regarded as enjoying a less nourishing diet than that of the English, as exemplified by the stereotypically weak and watery "soupe maigre" and salad

referenced in many anti-Gallic satires of the 1700s (Morris 1953; Lehmann 1999; Bindman 2003; Rogers 2004). Anti-French food slurs also implicitly contrasted the perception of the French as “vain, over-civilized [and] pretentious” (Atherton 1974, 85) against the honesty and wholesomeness symbolised by English roast beef.

The culinary stereotypes of Scottishness that developed within English cultural discourse from the early seventeenth century onwards similarly served as negative reflections of England’s burgeoning sense of its own culinary national identity during this period (Bishop 1991; Rogers 2004; Leach 2008). As with the earlier jokes about the Welsh love of cheese, poverty is the predominant theme, to the extent that Scotland is often specifically associated with famine and starvation. Thus the Scots are frequently caricatured not simply in terms of the inferiority of their diet, but in terms of their lack of access to any form of nourishment whatsoever. In satirical accounts from the early 1600s onwards, Scotland is typically portrayed as a “barren desert [*sic*]” or a “desolate Wilderness,” the antithesis of England’s “Land of Plenty” (Churchill 1763a, 23; *The Flying Machine from Edinburgh....* (1762) (BM Satires 3859)).<sup>20</sup> The narrator of the *Perfect description of the people and country of Scotland* (1617), for example, emphasises the barrenness of the Scottish landscape, commenting on the absence of fruit and trees and that “the thistle is ... the fairest flower in their garden.” He adds that “I saw

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<sup>20</sup> *Gisbal’s preferment....* (1762) (BM Satires 3849) combines both concepts, describing Scotland as “barren as the Deserts of the Wilderness.” Several satires, meanwhile, feature Scottish characters referring to England as “the Land of Plenty,” including *We are all a comeing....* (1761) (BM Satires 3823); *The Caledonian voyage to Money-Land* (1763) (BM Satires 3856); and *We are all come....* (ca. 1762) (BM Satires 3858).

little grass but in their pottage," a dehumanising device that implies that the land was so barren that rather than feeding grass to their animals the Scots were forced to eat it themselves (quoted in Brown 1970, 97-98).<sup>21</sup> Nonetheless, he suggests that "the ground might be fruitful had they the wit to manure it," (97), placing the blame for their destitution entirely on the Scots themselves. A poem published in the *Gentleman's Magazine* in the wake of the defeat of the Jacobite Rising of 1745-46 goes still further, describing Scotland as a land of "steril [*sic*] rocks," "frozen hills" and "everlasting snow," "[w]here Want and Winter share a gloomy reign." Recounting the events of the Rising, the poet describes how, from this barren wilderness, "*Scotia* pour'd, in swarms, the savage foe/ To banish blessings in their wastes unknown/ And make our lands as joyless as their own" (Verses address'd to the Gentlemen of Worcester.... 1748, 277).<sup>22</sup>

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<sup>21</sup> Rackwitz notes that English travellers in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries repeatedly complained about "the difficulties of providing for horses" resulting from the inavailability of grass and hay in Scotland (2007, 117).

<sup>22</sup> We may compare a passage from an English review of Meg Dods's *Cook and housewife's manual* (1826), one of the best-known nineteenth-century Scottish cookbooks. The reviewer offers a more humorous take on the perception of Scotland as a frozen wasteland, referring to "indigenous productions, such as ices, snows, and other delicacies, which we [i.e., the English] procure by artificial means, but which are so prevalent in Scotland, that the newspapers, the other day, gave a fearful account of the snows being threatened to be destroyed by fire, or moorburn, somewhere about one of the best cultivated spots in the kingdom. The consternation occasioned by this danger, we learn from private letters, was quite distressing; the unusual value of the land and crop being such as to impress the people with the dread of an irretrievable national calamity, equal to the burning of all the one pound notes from Berwick to Caithness" (Review.... 1826, 449). The gradual shift to a less overtly hostile, more humorous tone in English caricatures of Scottishness during the nineteenth century is discussed further in Chapter 3.

Significantly, the timing of the majority of the satirical accounts associating Scotland with barrenness and dearth does not appear to have coincided directly with periods of actual famine in the country. The notorious “ill years” of the 1690s saw by far the worst famine in Scotland during this period (see Cullen 2010), exacerbated by the economic disaster that resulted from the collapse of the planned Scottish trading colony at Darien on the isthmus of Panama. Yet the metaphorical association of Scotland with barrenness and dearth within English cultural discourse continued well into the second half of the 1700s, a century during which Scotland suffered a total of only around five years of famine (Gibson and Smout 1995, 225). Atherton observes, for example, that the Scots featured in the satirical prints produced during Lord Bute’s period of influence are typically depicted as “thin, bony, and scraggy” (1974, 210), suggesting their lack of adequate nourishment. The fictional map of Scotland depicted in the satirical print *The political senses....* (1768) (BM Satires 4234), meanwhile, features such landmarks as the “Fields of Poverty,” the “Vale of Distress” and the “River Need,” as well as a mountain range labelled “very Barren producing only Thistles and a few Wild White Roses” (see Figure 2.2).<sup>23</sup> Similarly, a poem published in the *British antidote to Caledonian poison* [1763/64], purportedly transcribed from an etching on “a pein of glass in an inn on the Northern road,” characterises Scotland as “[a] barren land, without a tree,” where “[t]he rankest beggary [*sic*] and pride” are “[a]s close as Nits and Lice ally’d” (*British*

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<sup>23</sup> The “River Need” is a pun on Tweed, the river that runs along part of the Scottish-English border. The “Wild White Roses” are probably a reference to the white cockades worn by the Jacobites.

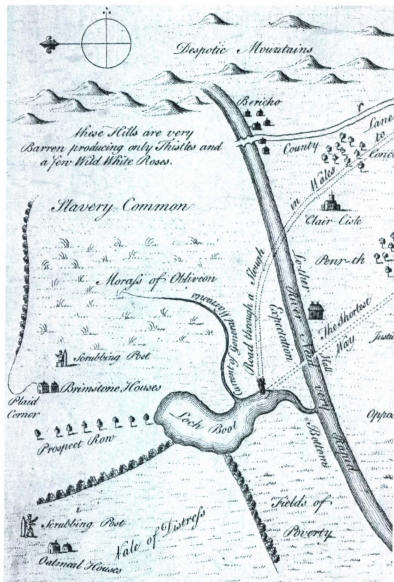


Figure 2.2. Detail from the fictional map of Scotland in *The political senses...* (1768) (BM Satires 4234), featuring such landmarks as the "Fields of Poverty," the "Vale of Distress" and the "River Need" (© Trustees of the British Museum)

*antidote*.... [1763/64], 1:3). Many English satirists similarly played on the notion that the Scots were mysteriously proud despite their degradation.

Probably the best-known statement of this theme is Charles Churchill's *Prophecy of Famine* (1763a), which influenced many other satires of the period. Churchill describes Scotland as a place where "Famine, *by her children always known/ As proud as poor*, ... fix'd her *native throne*" (16), and where even the insects and other wild creatures struggle to find nourishment.<sup>24</sup> The most striking image in the poem occurs when Famine herself is hideously personified as a Scot (see Figure 2.3). Adam Rounce remarks on the interlinked themes of famine, disease and madness that form a "dark undercurrent" to this passage, arguing that "Scotland here is not just a primitive and barren land that can be mocked and laughed at," but "an utterly alien geography," the "imagined opposite" of Churchill's "imagined Englishness" (2005, 31-32):

Pale *Famine* rear'd the head; her eager eyes,  
Where hunger e'en to madness seem'd to rise,  
Speaking aloud her throes and pangs of heart,  
Strain'd to get loose, and from their orbs to start;  
Her hollow cheeks were each a deep-sunk cell,  
Where wretchedness and horror lov'd to dwell;  
With double rows of useless teeth supplied,  
Her mouth from ear to ear extended wide,  
Which, when for want of food her entrails pined,  
She oped, and cursing, swallow'd nought but wind;  
All shrivell'd was her skin; and here and there,  
Making their way by force, her bones lay bare;  
Such filthy sight to hide from human view,  
O'er her foul limbs a tatter'd Plaid she threw.  
(Churchill 1763a, 21)

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<sup>24</sup> In Scotland, Churchill writes, "half-starv'd spiders prey'd on half-starv'd flies;/ In quest of food, Efts [*newts*] strove in vain to crawl;" and "Slugs, pinch'd with hunger, smear'd the slimy wall" (1763a, 16).



Figure 2.3. Frontispiece to the original quarto edition of Charles Churchill's poem *The prophecy of famine* (1763a), showing famine hideously personified as a Scot (Joy Fraser collection)



In those cases where the Scots are represented as anything other than starving, they are typically characterised as eking out a meagre existence on stigmatised poverty foods that were widely regarded as more suitable for animals. The stereotypically Scottish poverty food *par excellence* was oatmeal, and it is likely that the prominence of oatmeal among its ingredients contributed, at least in part, to the subsequent incorporation of haggis within the stereotypical diet of the “beggarly Scot.” Oatmeal as a foodstuff had been associated with the Scots since at least the early fourteenth century and continued to form the mainstay of the Scottish diet throughout the eighteenth (Cooper 1937, 768; Gibson and Smout 1995, 231). As P. Hume Brown notes: “All the early travellers in Scotland ... agree in stating that oatmeal was the chief fare of the lowland Scots,” and “[s]ubsequent travellers bear the same testimony” (1970, 98). A much-quoted passage from the fourteenth-century *Chronicles* of Jean Froissart describes how Scottish soldiers on the move would each carry a broad plate of metal and a small bag of oatmeal, which they would mix with water to form a paste and cook into a thin cake (Brown 1970, 9). By the mid seventeenth century Scotland had earned the nickname “the Land of Cakes” because of the popularity of oatcakes as a foodstuff. In 1719, for example, a Swedish traveller named Henrik Kalmeter commented that: “The Scotts [*sic*] in England ... oftentimes remember their friends beyond the Tweed or in the land of Cakes, which name is given in Scotland of certain sort of bread made of oats and called cakes” (Smout 1978, 3).<sup>25</sup>

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<sup>25</sup> Alexander Fenton states that the earliest known reference to the “Land of Cakes” dates from 1659 (2007, 403).

There are indications in some of the early accounts by travellers and other commentators of the stigma that was later to become attached to oatmeal as a culinary stereotype of Scottishness within satirical portrayals of the "beggarly Scot." In his *History of Greater Britain* (1521), for example, John Major includes a passage "defending the use of oaten bread against the aspersions of a Frenchman who had returned with some from Scotland to France, and 'had shown it about as a monstrosity.'" Major concludes the passage by emphasising "that oaten bread is not a thing to be laughed at" (Cooper 1937, 786; cf. Read 1934, 83). Two and a half centuries later, Guthrie's *New geographical, historical, and commercial grammar* is similarly disparaging about "[t]he excessive use of oat-meal" in Scotland. This, Guthrie argues, "undoubtedly, gave a hardness to the features of the vulgar of both sexes, besides some other disagreeable consequences it was attended with ... [and] accounts for the common observation, that the faces of the lower women in Scotland are commonly very coarse" (1770, 72).

Their fondness for oats features in satirical depictions of the Scots as primitive barbarians from the early seventeenth century, when the stereotype first began to emerge within the abusive accounts discussed by Rackwitz. The author of the *Perfect description....* (1617), for example, describes how during King James's visit, the Scots recommended the consumption of "oaten cakes" to the royal footmen in order "to make them long-winded [i.e., flatulent]" (quoted in Brown 1970, 98). He continues:

they keep no holydays, nor acknowledge any saint but St Andrew [Scotland's patron saint], who they said got that honour by presenting Christ with an oaten cake after his forty days fast. They say likewise, that he that translated the Bible was the son of a maltster, because it speaks of

a miracle done by barley-loaves; whereas they swear that they were oaten cakes, and that no other bread of that quantity could have sufficed so many thousands. (quoted in Brown 1970, 101)

The use of oatmeal as a culinary stereotype of Scottishness by subsequent satirists often functions, like many other food slurs, as a dehumanising device. That the English during this period widely regarded oatmeal as a food more suitable for animals than humans is expressed most famously in Samuel Johnson's notorious definition of oats in his *Dictionary of the English language* (1755). According to Johnson, oats are "a grain, which in England is generally given to horses, but in Scotland supports the people" (1755, 2: n. pag.), a "mocking definition of a Scottish staple" which, as Matthew Simpson points out, seems to imply that "oats ... is not food at all but fodder" (2003, 109-10; cf. Cooper 1937; Read 1934).<sup>26</sup> The broadside ballad "The curse of Scotland" [ca. 1707?] is similarly based on the motif of burgoo, or oatmeal porridge, as a food slur that effectively dehumanises the Scots:

We have got no dinner, alas! what shall we do,  
For we are all true Englishmen, and cannot eat burgoo,  
For Monday that's a Scotchman's day, for they have a jovial feast,  
Burgoo is fit for Scotchmen, but for no other beast.  
(Curse of Scotland [ca. 1707?], stanza 1; cf. Holloway and Black 1975, 79)

A similar process of dehumanisation can be identified at work in the use of oatmeal as a culinary stereotype within the large corpus of anti-Scottish satirical prints and verse that were published in London during the second half of the eighteenth century.

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<sup>26</sup> The *Perfect description*.... (1617) includes what might be interpreted as a precursor to Johnson's quip about oats and horses: "They say our cooks are too saucy, and for grooms and coachmen they wish them to give to their horses no worse than they eat themselves" (quoted in Brown 1970, 98).

Johnson's dietary comparison between Scots and horses is taken a stage further in the verse accompanying *Gisbal and Bathsheba*.... (ca. 1762) (BM Satires 3850), which lists, among the many Scottish characters featured in the print, "Gomer Horselike, eating oats in y<sup>e</sup> Croud."<sup>27</sup> Here the process of dehumanisation is made explicit: Gomer not only eats the same food as horses do, but is thereby overtly relegated to "Horselike" status. The print itself shows Gomer standing among a crowd of his fellow Scots and shovelling the oats into his mouth using his hand, his lack of civilised manners implicitly suggesting that he is "less than human" (cf. Montaña 1997, 52; see Figure 2.4). The marked choice of verbs used in several of the satires to describe the act of eating oatmeal as performed by Scots further contributes to this process of dehumanisation. The Scotsman featured in *The Tyburn interview* (1763) (BM Satires 4017), for example, is described as "growsing his Oatmeal," an apparent confusion of the verbs *to browse* and *to graze*, both of which are typically used to refer to animals rather than people. Elsewhere, the Scots' over-reliance on oatmeal is used to account for their supposed ill-health: the artist of *The mountebank* (1762) (BM Satires 3853), for example, has Lord Bute refer to the "distemper...., so peculiar to our Country, occasion'd by y<sup>e</sup> immoderate use of Oatmeal." The fictional map of Scotland in *The political senses*.... (1768) (BM Satires 4234), meanwhile, although it focuses primarily on notions of barrenness and famine, also

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<sup>27</sup> The *Gisbal* and *Bathsheba* of the title of this print were common nicknames for Lord Bute and Princess Augusta, mother of George III, with whom Bute was widely rumoured to be conducting an illicit relationship. Atherton notes that "'Gisbal' is a corruption of 'Esh-baal,' the younger son of Saul and the last of his line" (1974, 213). Accordingly, the Scots in the satires are frequently referred to as the Hebronites, of whom Gomer was one.



Figure 2.4. Detail from *Gisbal and Bathsheba....* (ca. 1762) (BM Satires 3850), showing "Gomer Horselike, eating oats" among a crowd of his fellow Scots (© Trustees of the British Museum)

features "Oatmeal Houses" for the sustenance of the Scottish people (see Figure 2.2, above).

By the middle of the eighteenth century, other dishes were gradually being incorporated into the stereotypical diet of the "beggarly Scot," the majority of which contained oatmeal as a key ingredient. In November 1759, William Tod, a young journeyman printer from Edinburgh then living in London, wrote to his friend William Smellie back home in Scotland.<sup>28</sup> Like many of his countrymen, Tod had relocated to the English capital in order to advance his career. In his letter, he recounts some of the insults with which, he states, the natives were in the habit of tormenting Scots who had recently arrived from the North. He writes:

They [the English] take the Scotch to be very clanish [*sic*], and easily touched [*vexed*]; and for this reason, whenever a raw Sawney (as they call him) is new-hauled, or fresh imported, his jealous ear is very soon alarmed with reflexions (he may think unmannerly) upon the poverty of his country— Such as What [the] deil brings you here? Get home to your Crowdie—an' be damn'd to you. Ha' ye got your parritch [*porridge*] yet? Pray, when will you get a Sheeps head or a haggis, you ill-far'd lown [*ugly wretch*]. Did you ever see meat [*food*] in Scotland, saving Oatmeal hasty pudding, &c.— Keep out of his way, Thomas, or by G—d, you'll get the itch. These, and a thousand such, they utter out of pure rigg [*fun, mischief*] and merriment.... (Tod 1759, [2]; Kerr 1811, 1:46)<sup>29</sup>

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<sup>28</sup> William Smellie (1740-95) went on to become one of Scotland's foremost printers and is best known today for his work as compiler and editor of the first edition of the *Encyclopaedia Britannica* (1768-71) (Brown 2008). According to Smellie's biographer, Robert Kerr, Tod "had been his fellow compositor in the printing-house of Messrs Hamilton, Balfour, & Neil" in Edinburgh prior to moving to London (1811, 1:43).

<sup>29</sup> This quotation is transcribed from Tod's manuscript, which is housed among the William Smellie papers in the National Museums Scotland Library in Edinburgh. A section of each page of the manuscript is missing, and I have drawn on the complete transcription of the letter in Kerr's 1811 edition of Smellie's correspondence to help fill in the blanks. I wish to extend special thanks to Andrew McDougall of the National Museums Scotland Library for supplying me with a copy of Tod's manuscript while the

The most remarkable feature of Tod's account is that all but one of the insults referred to in his letter take the form of "unmannerly reflexions" on the poverty of the Scottish diet. In addition to haggis, the foods he describes as having been used to taunt the Scottish immigrants include crowdie, porridge, and hasty pudding, a dish made from oatmeal stirred in boiling milk or water to form a thick paste (*OED*). The only dish mentioned that does not include oatmeal among its ingredients is singed sheep's head. Like haggis, its incorporation into the stereotypical diet of the "beggarly Scot" was probably due, in part, to its status as inferior meat that could be unfavourably contrasted with English roast beef. The use of mutton in both dishes, rather than beef, is also likely to have been of symbolic significance. In the case of haggis, of course, the satirists found a dish that was doubly resonant as a poverty food, since it incorporated both oatmeal and offal, the latter commonly regarded as comprising those parts of the animal that would only be eaten out of necessity rather than choice. Tod's account thus not only provides a valuable insight into the range of culinary stereotypes of Scottishness in existence during the 1750s, but also a tantalising snippet of evidence to suggest that ethnic food slurs directed against the Scots were circulating orally within mid-eighteenth-century English folk culture.

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Library was closed to the public for renovations. "Rigg and merriment": earlier in his letter Tod writes that "the people are very good natured— They have a way of jeering one another, which they call rigg & going-off upon each other, & can say the severest things, and vent the most poignant sarcasms, with the greatest serenity & good-nature imaginable" (Tod 1759, [2]; Kerr 1811, 1:45–46). As John Clive and Bernard Bailyn note, this last comment suggests that "there was little real malice behind such common jibes" (1954, 212), but this is debatable.

Probably the fullest insight into the state of the stereotypical Scottish diet during this period, however, is offered by a satirical account concerning the establishment of a fictional "Scotch eating house" or "North Country ordinary" in the neighbourhood of St. James's in London. In fact, this account forms one half of a pair, both of which were originally published in Dublin and situated the fictional eating house near the Linnen-Hall in that city, suggesting that culinary stereotypes of Scottishness during this period were not confined to the English. In the Irish context, the "North Country" almost certainly refers to Ulster, where large numbers of Lowland Scots had been settled since the state-sponsored Plantation of Ulster in the early 1600s, under James VI and I. The first text in the pair outlines a series of "Proposals" for the establishment of the eating-house, while the second presents "An account of the grand entertainment" that is said to have taken place on its opening night. The latter originally appeared as a broadside printed in Dublin by James Carson in January 1739 (North Country ordinary opened... 1739; cf. Pollard 2000, 91), and is perhaps the earliest satirical depiction of the Scottish diet to include haggis (see Figure 2.5). Although logically the "Proposals" belong prior in sequence to the "Account," I have found no trace of them until four years later, when both pieces were included as addenda to an edition of James Row's *Wouns o' the Kirk o' Scotlan*, also printed in Dublin by and for Carson (see Row 1743).

The following discussion is based on the versions of the two texts that were published in the first edition of *Jemmy Carson's collections*, published by Carson in 1744 (see Carson 1744), but their continuing popularity in both Ireland and England is indicated by the fact that both were reprinted several times throughout the remainder of



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The North Country Ordinary Opened :  
OR, AN  
ACCOUNT  
OF THE  
Grand Entertainment  
Near the Linnen-Hall, January 3d. 1738-9.

My Dear Kintyre Folks,

WHEN I formerly Advis'd the Publick, that there was let up, near the Linnen-Hall, a South-Sea-Jacking or North-Country Ordinary, for the Benefit of a North-Country Chapman, and such others that love good Eating, and Cheere. And when as it was kind, that you the Norths, for the Love of a good Supper, might have Joy at the very hearing of our Proposals. But, we honestly confess, we was something longsome, before we could get our Thoroughly prepar'd for this a good and necessary and useful Entertainment, and money a you was find we had never perform our Promise. But our Comfort was, and by they kind word enough, that we should never tell any Loke.

And now, for the Comfort and general Satisfaction of us say our Dear Country-Folks, men and wome, Rich and Poor, Young and Auld: Take by this Private Declaration, open my doors, one and our againe. That this famous Ordinary, is not only let up, and ready provided with a things Necessary and Convenient, but was opened the other Night, we had a Feast, that was more fit for the King than his Subjects. In good truth, it was a revell d'yn Hart, only to have from the Clerk said, we ne life than *Two mickle men Wooden Dishes for a' dinsty bra Scurvy Men, as say in the head World*; the Order o' the *Trenchers, Horse Spoons and Spoonstons, and the help o' an ancle Clab, that was laid between every two*, was ren. stand'd you Sals. Never was Morn better drest, or brought in better Order till our Table; for to tell the Truth, a' the Cooks pinn'd their *Paneth Day*. Nis, it is no possible to describe it, in our Satisfaction to them, who did na for it. But now, gin this Description gives any Pleasure, What wad ye ha had, to his chiv'd as two Weems as like us o' us did, who was present at it. I wd advise ye, not to let ye Wren him thought about it, as they be Burnt.

But now, to fit our the best Company them round the Table, view was Admiration the Variety o' Dainties before them, their Mouth yon'd, Mouth yon'd, and tick tickin o' Lips was there, that they had enough to do to hide for the Blisss, which was said we a grave Deliberation.

But now I min ask here, and beg ye wad sit out, till I describe the Order o' the Meat we had upon the Table.

In the middle o' the Table was a mickle man Dith broader than the Table, for o' South *Prostate*, that beakless Spunkie was making o' it; on, first I say, it was serve a Body out the *New Weaver*, and in the middle o' it, there was a Hillsick o' Butter, as much as a *mate Abolition*. But tak test, it was not as like the Butter-milk by the *Clary Fades in the Trees*, that has neither Smell nor Taste. No, as for in truth, it had enough of both, for as this appeared it the *bonny Calumny o' the Sky*.

The Second was our *Haggis*, it like an weethin, that ye wad, but tane them for two *Taw Benders*, and they were atig as *But's Scaps*, right wad fill'd with they were good *Levers, Lagers, Symples, Grains, gray Auld, Trenchers, Paneths, and Tangle*. But when our *Whither we're Buck with them, all you'll keep they* (poor'd and puff'd, and fill'd the *hail Hostle* were lacka *Perfume*, that it Revis'd the Spirit o' the *hail Neighbourhood*. I canna put by this excellent Dish, without a Word in praise.

THE SONG.  
Now of our rare Dainties we had,  
The Haggis they bears Bally

Figure 2.5. Front page of the original broadside edition of "The North Country ordinary opened....." printed in Dublin by James Carson in January 1739: the narrator's "account of the grand entertainment" is possibly the earliest satirical account of the Scottish diet to incorporate haggis (Trinity College Library Dublin)

the century. *Jemmy Carson's collections* went through three subsequent editions, in 1759, 1774 and 1787.<sup>30</sup> A version of the "Proposals" was reprinted – under the title "Advertisement for opening a Scotch eating-house" – in Jack Strange's *Book of oddities*, published in London circa 1775 (see Strange [1775?], 53-57), and again in the variant editions of that work that were printed in Dublin in the 1790s (Broadgrin 1790, 38-41; *Book of oddities* 1791, 38-41). London versions of the "Proposals" were also issued several times in broadside form; surviving broadsides have been dated circa 1775, circa 1785, circa 1799, and as late as circa 1817-24. In the London versions, the "North Country" referred to is, of course, Scotland rather than Ulster.

Both the "Proposals" and the "Account" present a remarkably detailed depiction of the diet of the stereotype Scot during the mid eighteenth century.<sup>31</sup> Their existence confirms that a stereotyped version of the "Scotch" diet – including haggis – was firmly established as a key component of the wider stereotype of the "beggarly Scot" at least as early as 1739. Throughout both accounts, the emphasis is on the poverty, inferior quality and monotony of the menu that the narrator proposes to serve his patrons at the eating-

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<sup>30</sup> These three subsequent editions were presented as the "twelfth," "thirteenth" and "fourteenth" editions, respectively, though in fact only four editions in total appear to have been published. Mary Pollard (2000, 91) notes that a second edition was advertised in May 1748, but this does not seem to have materialised.

<sup>31</sup> The narrator also draws on other stereotypes of Scottishness, such as treachery and untrustworthiness, confiding to the reader that although his compatriots expressed unbounded enthusiasm for his proposed eating-house, "leath was I till trust their Eaths or Wards; for ... our nean Kintry Foke are a wheen o' paky slipper Cheels, and hae [a] gud ... warrant to play a Pliscan" [all *sic*] (Carson 1744, 38). Approximate translation: "loath was I to trust their Oaths or Words; for ... our own Country-Folk are a bunch of wily, slippery fellows, and may be relied upon to play a (dirty) Trick."

house. The narrator, himself a Scot, notes that his countrymen exhibit scant concern for the quality of their food: "they are a devilish Sideweam'd pack o' Fallows, and wad stow the Devil and aw o' thin Meet intil them ... deel heat they care for the Quality, se there be but enough o't" [all *sic*] (Carson 1744, 38).<sup>32</sup> The range of dishes that he proposes to serve reflects, once again, the predominance of oatmeal within the stereotypical diet of the "beggarly Scot." Among the dishes on the proposed menu are endless variations on oatmeal, including stirabout, or porridge; bannocks; and mashlin puddings, made from a mixture of various kinds of grain or of grain and legumes, such as oats or barley, peas and beans, ground into meal (*SND*). Also included are sowens, a dish consisting of oat husks and fine meal steeped in water and then strained (*CSD*). A second category of dishes have kale as their basic ingredient. Kale played a significant role within the Scottish diet from at least the fifteenth century (see Fenton 2007, 203-5), although I have not seen it mentioned in any of the other satirical accounts of this period. The narrator proposes to serve "Hacked Keal," "Rumbled Keal," and in some later versions also "Lang Keal"; colcannon, consisting of potatoes and cabbage mashed together (and better known today as an Irish dish); and dribble-beards, or curly kale boiled in fat broth (*SND*). The important point here is that the majority of the dishes consist of essentially the same ingredients prepared in a slightly different manner, thereby emphasising the monotony, as well as the poverty, of the menu. The dish referred to as *othem op[o]them* (more commonly *ithem titthem*) is perhaps the supreme example of this. The name derives from

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<sup>32</sup> Approximate translation: "they are a devilishly Big-bellied pack of Fellows, and would stuff themselves with all sorts of terrible, insubstantial Fare ... they don't give a damn about the Quality, so long as there be enough of it."

the phrase "of them, upon them" (or "of them, to them") and the dish consisted of sowens served together with the liquid, or swats, that had been strained off during the process of preparation (*SND*).

Moreover, several of the proposed dishes are to be made with inferior ingredients. For example, the narrator notes that the bannocks are to be made with "grey meal," a mixture of oatmeal and mill-dust eaten in times of scarcity (*SND*). The inferior quality of the menu is also illustrated by the list of "gud Drink" that he proposes to serve along with his food, which includes "Taplash, ... Whigg, Whey, Buttermilk, Souin Sheerins, Jutt, Scridagh, and Spootragh" (Carson 1744, 39). All of these have in common their status as weak, sour dregs and by-products. *Taplash* is the dregs or refuse left in the bottom of beer casks (*OED*); *Whigg* encompasses various products resulting from the souring of milk, including whey and buttermilk, which are also listed separately (*CSD*); while *Souin Sheerins* (i.e., *sowens shearings*) refers to the liquid strained off in the process of making sowens. *Jutt* refers to weak or sour ale, bad whisky, or more generally to any insipid drink or dregs (*CSD*), while *Spootragh* refers to drink of any kind, but derives from the Gaelic word *sput*, which implies contempt for bad drink (Jamieson 1808, 2: n. pag.).<sup>33</sup>

The narrator also alludes to the lack of roast meat within his proposed menu, commenting that: "As for Speets, ye ken we'll hae nae occasion for [*as for spits, you know we'll have no occasion for*]," although he adds that "gen I find it wull Answer, who kens but we may reech to a bit o' roast Meet e'er lang [*if I find it will answer, who knows but that we may reach to a bit of roast meat before long*]" (Carson 1744, 39, 40). Singed

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<sup>33</sup> I have been unable to trace the meaning of the word *Scridagh*.

sheep's head and haggis are among the dishes to be served on Sundays, when patrons are to be required to pay an extra halfpenny, and were also included on the menu for the official opening of the eating-house as described in the "Account," along with singed sheep's feet and black puddings. The "Account" includes a satirical poem in praise of the haggis that describes how "*o' aw [all] the rare Danties we had, / The Haggis ... beers the Bell.*" The narrator's description of the two haggises that graced the table is worth quoting in full:

The Second [course] was twa *Haggisses*, se like aen anether, that ye wad hae tean them for twa *Twin Brether's*, and they war as big as *Bee's Scaps*; right weel fill'd war they wee good *Livers*, *Lights Sybows*, *Grots*, *gray Meel*, *Thraples*, *Panches*, and *Taough*. But whan our Whuttles war stuck intil them, ah, vow! how they spooted and puff'd, and fill'd the heal Hoose wee sich a Perfume, that it Reviv'd the Spirits of a' the heal Neighbourhood. [all *sic*] (Carson 1744, 43)<sup>34</sup>

The prominence accorded to haggis within this pair of satirical accounts suggests that as early as 1739 – almost fifty years before the initial publication of Burns's "To a Haggis" – the dish had already attained a central position within the stereotypical Scottish diet.

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<sup>34</sup> Approximate translation: "The Second [course] was two *Haggisses*, so like one another, that you would have taken them for two *Twin Brothers*, and they were as big as beehives; right well filled were they with good *Livers*, *Lungs*, *Onions*, *Groats* [hulled grain], *grey Meal*, *Windpipes*, *Paunches*, and *Taough* [untraced]. But when our Knives were stuck into them, ah, vow! how they spouted and puffed, and filled the whole House with such a Perfume, that it Revived the Spirits of all the whole Neighbourhood."

### The "Hungry Scot": Dietary Metaphors and Scottish Immigration to the South

As discussed above, anti-Scottish satires gained in popularity in England during periods of particular tension in the relationship between the two countries. Among the prevailing concerns of the English throughout the eighteenth century was the perceived threat of an "invading horde" from the North, as Scots increasingly rose to positions of power and influence within the British state and other institutions (cf. Lamont 1997, 344). This section discusses the significant role played by anti-Scottish food slurs and dietary stereotypes in satirising the ambitions of the large numbers of Scottish immigrants to the South during this period, and in expressing English reactions to their increasingly visible presence and influence in English life. Examples are drawn primarily from the large corpus of anti-Scottish satirical prints and verse that were published in London during Lord Bute's period of influence, and especially during the 1760s.

Perhaps the most obvious manifestation of this theme is the way in which the alleged poverty of the Scottish diet was used by English satirists to account for the motivations of those Scots who travelled to England to advance their careers. Thus, for example, the perceived avarice of the power-seeking Scottish immigrants is often figured in the satires as a physical hunger. This metaphor is exemplified in the verse accompanying one of several anti-Scottish images featured in the satirical print *The posts* (1762) (BM Satires 3944), which describes how: "From barren Lands by Famine led/ The Scotchmen fly to us for Bread" (see Figure 2.6). A similar idea is expressed in the following verse, referring to the print *The Caledonian voyage to Money-Land* (1763)



Figure 2.6. Detail from *The posts* (1762) (BM Satires 3944), showing a pair of Scotsmen en route to London; the accompanying verse reads: "From barren Lands by Famine led/ The Scotchmen fly to us for Bread" (© Trustees of the British Museum)

(BM Satires 3856), in which the use of the word "Prey" further illustrates the dehumanising effect of many of the anti-Scottish food slurs of this period:

From barren *Caledonian* Lands,  
Where Famine uncontroll'd commands,  
The half-starv'd Clans in search of Prey,  
Come over the Hills and far away.  
(*British antidote* [1763/64], 2:3)<sup>35</sup>

In an obviously related example, referring to *Gisbal's preferment*.... (1762) (BM Satires 3849), Lord Bute is represented as a clan chieftain, providing for the needs of his hungry clansfolk:

From the hills of pale *Famine* the *bonny Lads* fly,  
With their wives and their bairnes [*children*],  
—*John a Boot* [i.e., Bute]<sup>36</sup> is the cry:  
Oh, rejoice all ye Clans! on the muckle [*great*] occasion,  
He'll *proved* for ye *aw* [*all*];—to the curse of this Nation.  
(*Scots scourge* [1765?], 2:3)

In a parallel way, the prosperity that the Scottish immigrants were perceived to enjoy upon their arrival in the South is represented metaphorically as a physical obesity or fullness of the belly, as the Scottish characters depicted in the satires literally "grow fat on the *Englishmen's Bread*" (*The peace-soup-makers*.... (1762) (BM Satires 3882)). In *We are all come* (ca. 1762) (BM Satires 3858), for example, a fat Scotsman invites an audience of his fellow Scots to "[c]ome my lads till [*to*] the land of Plenty," adding: "ken ye well how my Guts are swell'd sin [*since*] I came to the south. I was once as Skinny

<sup>35</sup> "O'er the hills and far away" was the title of a popular song of the period.

<sup>36</sup> The boot was a common satirical symbol used to represent Lord Bute (*boot* being a pun on Bute).



Wembd [*stomached*] as any of ye All."<sup>37</sup> One of the Scottish characters featured in *The Caledonians arrival in Money-Land* (1762) (BM Satires 3857) similarly boasts that "[s]ince I have been in Money-land I am grown as fat as an Alderman."

As illustrated by some of the examples already discussed, such satires are frequently based on a symbolic opposition between the conceptualisation of Scotland as a land of famine and dearth and that of England as Canaan, the Biblical land of milk and honey (see Exod. 3.8; Josh. 5.6; cf. Atherton 1974, 212-13). In *We are all come* (ca. 1762) (BM Satires 3858), for example, a Scotsman newly arrived in London pronounces that "we'l [*sic*] take this spot for the land of Canaan." Similarly, in *We are all a comeing* (1761) (BM Satires 3823), the driver of the coach from Scotland to England tells his passengers: "I'll drive ye till [*to*] the land of Plenty, that flows with Milk & Brimstone." Here honey is replaced with brimstone, a common cure for "the itch," or scabies, thereby implicitly reinforcing a further element of the stereotype of the "beggarly Scot" (Stephens 1870-83, 4:30; cf. Chapter 3, below). The Scottish anti-heroes of Churchill's *Prophecy of famine*, meanwhile, savour the prospect of leaving their "barren desert [*sic*]" and travelling to England's "rich plains/ Where milk with honey flows, and plenty reigns" (1763a, 23). As this passage continues, the conceptualisation of the Scots as plundering hordes becomes increasingly explicit, as the narrators envision themselves feasting on the fruits of England's harvests. They anticipate how:

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<sup>37</sup> In a variant of this print in the fifth edition of *A political and satirical history* [1763?], this speech reads as follows: "Come my lads till the land of Plenty ken you well how my Guts are swell'd sin I came to the South I was once as hag'd [*haggard?*] as any of ye aw" (*Political and satirical history*.... [1763?], 2: Plate 130).

For us, the earth shall bring forth her increase;  
 For us, the flocks shall wear a golden fleece;  
 Fat Beeves [*cattle*] shall yield us dainties not our own,  
 And the grape bleed a nectar yet unknown;  
 For our advantage shall their harvests grow,  
 And *Scotsmen* reap what they disdain'd to sow....  
 (Churchill 1763a, 23)<sup>38</sup>

The representation of the alleged avarice of the Scottish immigrants as a physical hunger that can only be satiated by feasting on English food is reinforced by the use of animalistic metaphors to portray the Scottish immigrants. All of these metaphors, which provide a further illustration of the process of dehumanisation, are closely tied to conceptions of hunger, voraciousness and parasitism (cf. Atherton 1974, 101-5; O'Brien 2003, 42-43). As early as 1679, Thomas Kirke had used the metaphor of a louse to comment on the Scots' alleged parasitism, writing that:

A Louse preys upon its own Fosterer and Preserver, and is productive of those Minute-Animals called Nitts; so *Scotland*, whose *Proboscis* joyns too close to *England*, has suckt away the nutriment from *Northumberland*, ... and from its opposite A—, has calved those Nitty Islands, called the *Orcaades* [i.e., Orkneys] and the *Shetland* (*quasi Shite-land*) Islands.  
 (quoted in Rackwitz 2007, 119)

A similar conceptualisation of the Scots as parasites occurs in a satirical print entitled *Carr's antidote for C-I-d-n* [Caledonian] *impurities* (ca. 1762) (BM Satires 3845), in which a monstrous tartan-clad infant is depicted sucking blood from Britannia's breast (see Figure 2.7). Other satires similarly use animalistic metaphors to depict the hunger

<sup>38</sup> A further reference to England as the land of milk and honey occurs in *The exaltation of the Boot* (1762) (BM Satires 3861), in which a Scottish character newly arrived in London declares: "This is the Land of Canaan." In a variation on this theme, the image in *The flying machine from Edinburgh...* (1762) (BM Satires 3859) is accompanied by a quotation from Joel 2.3: "The Garden of Eden is before them, and behind them a desolate Wilderness."



Figure 2.7. Detail from *An antidote by Carr for C-l-d-n [Caledonian] impurities* (ca. 1762) (BM Satires 3845), showing a monstrous Scottish infant sucking blood from Britannia's breast while her own children starve (© Trustees of the British Museum)

and greed of the Scots. In *Gisbal's preferment....* (1762) (BM Satires 3849), for example, Bute refers to his followers as "Hungry as Wolves! Rapacious as the Savage Tiger when with-held from Food!" In the verses accompanying *The political senses....* (1768) (BM Satires 4234), meanwhile, Bute is depicted as a rat who "prowls the Pantry ... for Cheese,/ His Appetite to Gratify, and please." The verses go on to describe how, together with "othere Rats of Mickle [*great*] Might," he "lay[s] the Kitchin waste,/ Pleasing both Mental, and Corporal taste." The metaphor of the rat is particularly powerful given its reputation as a scavenger, stealing food that belongs to others, as well as the stigma attached to its status as disease-spreading vermin.

The animal that is most frequently used to depict the immigrant Scots, however, is the locust, a metaphor that succinctly encodes not only their vast numbers but also their destructive voraciousness. *Without / within* (ca. 1762) (BM Satires 3877), for example, features the following variant of the verses quoted above:

The half starv'd CLANS in hopes of Prey  
Come o'er the Hills and far away  
But let us still our Rights maintain  
And drive the LOCUST'S [*sic*] home again.

The use of the locust as a satirical symbol of Scottishness is made explicit in the "Humorous Explanation" of *Patriotism triumphant....* (ca. 1763) (BM Satires 4024) in *The British antidote to Caledonian poison* [1763/64], which describes the print as depicting "the Locusts of Scotland hunted down by the Bull-dogs of Old England" (*British antidote....* [1763/64], 2:6).<sup>39</sup> In a similar way, the artist of *The siege of*

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<sup>39</sup> The bulldog was by this period firmly established as a symbol of English national identity. It was closely associated both with the figure of John Bull as the

*Warwick-Castle* (1768) (BM Satires 4173) has an English character refer complainingly to "these Northern Locusts [who] want to Govern everywhere," reinforcing the association of locusts with the Scots' power-seeking careerism. Like the figuration of England as Canaan, the use of the locust metaphor reflects the popularity of parodies of Biblical language and imagery in the satires (George 1959, 1:124).<sup>40</sup> Indeed, the two metaphors often become conflated. In his poem *The true-born Englishman* (1701), for example, Daniel Defoe satirises an earlier influx of careerist Scots immigrants – "Thick as the Locusts which in *Egypt* swarm'd" – who "with ... hungry Hopes compleatly arm'd ... / Plunder'd our *Canaan* of the Milk and Honey" ([Defoe] 1701, 6). Similarly, the letterpress accompanying *We are all a comeing* (1761) (BM Satires 3823) in the fifth edition of *A political and satirical history* [1763?] describes the print as "a droll Caricature of the Expeditions of the Locusts to the *English Canaan*" (*Political and satirical history*.... [1763?], 2:3). An implicit conflation of the two metaphors also occurs in *Scotch arrogance*.... (1762) (BM Satires 3863), in which an English character complains: "what a damned abuse of English generosity that these locusts should suck all our Honey."

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archetypal Englishman and with roast beef as the quintessential symbol of English culinary nationalism (Rogers 2004, 110-22).

<sup>40</sup> For other references to the Scots as locusts, see, for example, *The laird of the posts*.... (ca. 1762) (BM Satires 3862), in which an English character observes that "ye Locusts are Coming"; and *A prophecy: The coach overturn'd*.... (ca. 1762) (BM Satires 3966), in which an Englishman driving off a group of Scotsmen with a whip remarks to his companion, "Ah Tom this Locust Hunting is good Sport." For Biblical references to the voracity of locusts, see Exod. 10.12,15; Joel 1.4,7,12, 2.3; Deut. 28.38; Ps. 78.46, 105.34; Isa. 33.4. For their numerousness, see Exod. 10.15; Jer. 46.23; Judg. 6.5, 7.12; Joel 2.10; Nah. 3.15 (Smith 1872, 478).

In addition to these figurative representations of the “hungry Scots,” English satirists drew on specific dishes from the evolving stereotypical diet of the “beggarly Scot” in order to mock the Scottish immigrants, who are often depicted rejoicing in the prospect of leaving behind the meagre diet of their native land. Again, oatmeal and haggis play a prominent role. A Scot en route to England in *The Caledonian voyage to Money-Land* (1763) (BM Satires 3856), for example, declares that “I’ll have nae mair [*no more*] Oatmeal & water.”<sup>41</sup> In *Gisbal’s preferment....* (1762) (BM Satires 3849), meanwhile, two Scotsmen pause for refreshment on their way south, inviting a third man, Gether, to “Tak some Sowens” with them. But Gether, intent on reaching England as quickly as possible, keeps walking and, without looking round, calls back to the others: “Damn your Sowens come away” (see Figure 2.8). The opposition between the Scots’ meagre diet and the hearty, wholesome fare they anticipate feasting on in England is encapsulated in the following conversation between two Scotsmen recently arrived in London in *The exaltation of the Boot* (1762) (BM Satires 3861):

Sawney: “Now Gibby we can come on for the muckle [*great*] Beef and Pudding”

Gibby: “Aye Sawney, tis better than living on haggist [*sic*]”

Conversely, in *The Highland seer....* (1762) (BM Satires 3867), Lord Bute professes to being so horrified by a visitation of the ghosts of former royal favourites that “gin [*if*] I were safe in my ain [*own*] Country, I’se [*I’d*] be content to feed on Bannocks & Haggies

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<sup>41</sup> This pronouncement is echoed in the related print *The Caledonians arrival in Money-Land* (1762) (BM Satires 3857), in which a Scottish character declares that “Now I’m a Laird I wonna [*won’t*] sell any mair Oatmeal.”

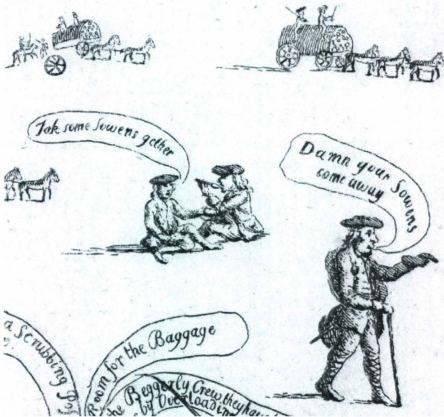


Figure 2.8. Detail from *Gisbal's preferment....* (1762) (BM Satires 3849), showing Gether, a Scotsman on his way to England, refusing to share a meal of sowens with his companions in his haste to arrive in the prosperous South (© Trustees of the British Museum)

[sic], as I were wont to do" (see Figure 2.9). Again, note the marked choice of verb: "to feed on."

One of the most prominent targets of such satire, apart from Bute himself, was the Scottish novelist, historian and critic Tobias Smollett, whom Bute hired to edit the pro-government periodical the *Briton*, and who was also the editor of the leading contemporary literary journal the *Critical Review*. Indeed, Scots in general enjoyed a high profile within the journalistic profession in London during this period, a circumstance that is satirised in an anonymous pamphlet entitled *The battle of the reviews*, issued in March 1760. The pamphleteer uses the nickname "Sawney Mac Smallhead" to refer to Smollett himself, while the names given to the predominantly Scottish editorial staff of the *Critical Review* include "Duncan Mac Croudy, Archibald Mac Bonacs, [and] Donald Mac Haggess" (quoted in Kelly 1987, 166; cf. Sorensen 2000b, 111-12). "Mac Bonacs" is almost certainly a reference to bannocks, which was sometimes spelt *bonacs* (or various similar spellings) during this period (cf. *SND*, *OED*). Thus, all three nicknames function as dehumanising devices whereby the Scottish journalists are literally defined as food: "a Sort of Eatables their Owners chiefly fed upon, and were fond of" (quoted in Kelly 1987, 167). A similar food-based attack on Smollett and his fellow journalists appears in a satirical verse entitled "Queries to the Critical Reviewers," by English poet John Hall-Stevenson, which originally appeared as a pamphlet in 1763 (see Hall-Stevenson 1795, 1:134-37). The poem was written in response to an unfavourable review of Hall-Stevenson's *Pastoral cordial* that appeared in the *Critical Review* in January of that year, in which the reviewer describes the work as





Figure 2.9. Detail from *The Highland seer...* (1762) (BM Satires 3867), showing Lord Bute horrified by a visitation of the ghosts of former royal favourites; he cries out: "By St Andrew, these ill-far'd Ghaists gar my Bleed run cauld with Horror! gin I were safe in my ain Country, I'se be content to feed on Bannocks & Haggies, as I were wont to do" (© Trustees of the British Museum)

"a kind of political poetical hodge-podge, without order, connection, or meaning"

(Review of *A pastoral cordial* 1763, 74). Taking up the culinary metaphor, Hall-Stevenson responds with an anti-Scottish food slur directed against Smollett and his fellow reviewers. He demands:

I come to ask you a few questions:  
Why should a hodge-podge make you queasy,  
You who for crowdys have digestions,  
On whom e'en haggesses sit easy?  
(Hall-Stevenson 1795, 1:135)<sup>42</sup>

The case of Alexander Wedderburn, first Earl of Rosslyn (1733-1805), another prominent Scot against whom similar food slurs were directed, suggests that the use of such slurs lasted well into the 1790s. William Franklin (1818) quotes an anonymous satirical verse about Wedderburn apparently composed on his accession to the Lord Chancellorship in January 1793 (cf. Murdoch 2008). The poem begins:

Whelp'd on some *lare* [bog], in *ruefu' poortith* [poverty] bred,  
In early youth with *aits* [oats] and *haggess* fed,  
Sent hungry forth at thy lean sire's command,  
To mend thy fortunes in this promised land....  
(quoted in Franklin 1818, 2:403)

This example provides a neat encapsulation of many of the themes of the earlier satirical materials: the dehumanisation effected by the use of the verb *whelp'd*; the figuration of the Scottish landscape as a barren wilderness and of England as Canaan; the degradation of the Scots as represented by the poverty of their diet; and the use of the metaphor of the

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<sup>42</sup> As Robert Spector observes, Hall-Stevenson's poem as a whole "ties together Smollett's Scottish heritage, Tory associations, and presumed Jacobite sympathies," all of which combine to create an impression of him as "an untrustworthy alien subversive" (1992, 13).

"hungry Scot" to account for Wedderburn's motivations in emigrating to the South. A satirical print issued around the same period shows Wedderburn as the archetypal beggarly Scot, emaciated, barefoot and filthy, scratching himself to relieve the irritation of the itch, and accompanied by a pig (1792/93) (BM Satires 4100) (see Figure 2.10). The accompanying caption includes a quotation from the seventh edition of Churchill's poem *The Rosciad* (1763b): "A peart prim hero of the northern race/ Fraud in his heart & famine in his face."<sup>43</sup>

The satires also make extensive use of culinary metaphors to depict the predicted impact of the allegedly excessive influx of Scottish immigrants on the prosperity and wellbeing of the English themselves. This is frequently expressed in terms of a dramatic role reversal, according to which, while the Scots grow fat on English food, the English themselves are left to starve. In the version of *The exaltation of the Boot* (1762) (BM Satires 3861) that appears in the fifth edition of *A political and satirical history* [1763?], for example, a Scottish character orders the English to "get ye out ye Southern[s] *[sic]* loons *[rascals]* we will Beggar & starve ye all" (*Political and satirical history...* [1763?], 2: Plate 129).<sup>44</sup> *We are all come* (ca. 1762) (BM Satires 3858) features a Scotsman similarly boasting that "[t]hey say we shall have all the place[s] of profit & the English may go starve." In the verse accompanying *A poor man loaded with mischief...*

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<sup>43</sup> The text of Churchill's original reads: "A pert, prim Prater [*chatterer, ranter, boaster* (*OED*)] of the northern race./ Guilt in his heart, and famine in his face" (1763b, 4).

<sup>44</sup> Another Scot in the same print declares: "Let em send the English to Canada," a country that, like Scotland, is depicted in the satires primarily in terms of its barrenness.



Figure 2.10. *Sawny Wetherbeaten or Judas Iscariot* (1792/93) (BM Satires 4100), depicting Lord Chancellor Alexander Wedderburn as a stereotypically treacherous, beggarly Scot: "Fraud in his heart & famine in his face" (© Trustees of the British Museum)

(1762) (BM Satires 3904), meanwhile, the roles are even more strikingly reversed: the author envisions London completely overrun with Scots and the unfortunate English forcibly evicted to Scotland, where they are reduced, among other indignities, to "Feed[ing] upon Crowdy and Onions."<sup>45</sup> Protest against the pervasive influence of Scots within the British state is also the theme of several satires in which a Scottish dietary regime is figuratively imposed on the English populace. That the Scottish immigrants were allegedly intent on eradicating English cultural and political identity and replacing it with their own is expressed, for example, in *The pedlars....* (1763) (BM Satires 4061). In this print, a procession of "Scotch merchants" is led by a figure holding a banner that reads: "down with English Roast Beef & up with Croudy & Haggis. Boot [i.e., Bute] for Ever" (see Figure 2.11).

A similar notion forms the premise of *A catalogue of the kitchin furniture of John Bull....* (ca. 1762) (BM Satires 3990). This print is a satire on the "parsimonious management" of the Royal Household by Earl Talbot, popularly nicknamed "Lord Skin Flint," whom Bute had appointed to the office of Lord Steward (Stephens 1870-83, 4:23). The reforms instituted by Talbot in the Household were widely regarded as one manifestation of a larger series of economic reforms implemented by the Bute administration, which, inevitably, became known as "Scotch Oeconomy."<sup>46</sup> *A catalogue*

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<sup>45</sup> The reference to onions as a Scottish foodstuff is unusual, and is probably an allusion to the Jacobites' alliance with France. In William Hogarth's famous painting *The gate of Calais* (1748), a tartan-clad Jacobite exile is depicted huddling under an archway in the foreground with only an onion for nourishment.

<sup>46</sup> Interestingly, however, Talbot himself was English.

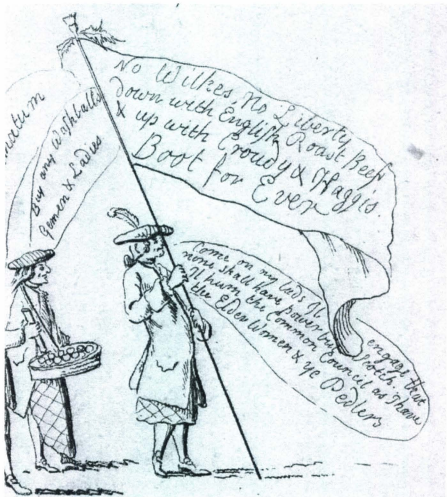


Figure 2.11. Detail from *The pedlars....* (1763) (BM Satires 4061), showing a “Scotch merchant” carrying a banner reading: “down with English Roast Beef & up with Croudy & Haggis” (© Trustees of the British Museum)

*of the kitchin furniture of John Bull....* illustrates how culinary stereotypes of Scottishness were used to reinforce existing stereotypes concerning the alleged meanness of the Scots, and how both, in turn, were employed to satirise Bute's most unpopular policies. The print depicts Talbot in the royal kitchen overseeing the auctioning-off of the cookware and kitchen implements, there being little use for them now that the place is "void of Victuals." The "*Poetical and humourous* [sic] *Explanation*" of the print in *The Scots scourge* [1765?] bemoans that under the current stringent regulations the only food that may be served here is Scottish:

In our late Monarch's reign well the table was spread,  
 Liberality prompted his heart and his head:  
 But now *Scotch* Oeconomy meanly intruding,  
 Turns sheep's heads *sir-loins*: and sour crowdy to *pudding*.  
 (*Scots scourge* [1765?], 1:1)

Accordingly, on the left-hand side of the print, a skinny Scotsman is shown chasing away three cooks with the words: "Awa wi ye Loons [*rascals*] ye ken not how to make a Scotch Haggist" (see Figure 2.12). On the other side, Bute is standing next to Princess Augusta, mother of George III, with whom he was widely rumoured to be conducting an illicit relationship. The Princess assures him: "That large Kettle my Lord some sheep's Heads in it will will [*sic*] make good gravy to nourish you," to which he replies: "by my Saul [*soul*], Madam that will do muckle Geud [*a great deal of good*] to me."

The use of food slurs to reinforce existing stereotypes concerning the alleged meanness of the Scots and to link both within a satire on Bute is also illustrated in *The peace-soup-makers....* (1762) (BM Satires 3882) (see Figure 2.13). This satire uses the metaphor of flavourless "Peace-Soup" (a pun on *pease*) to satirise the allegedly

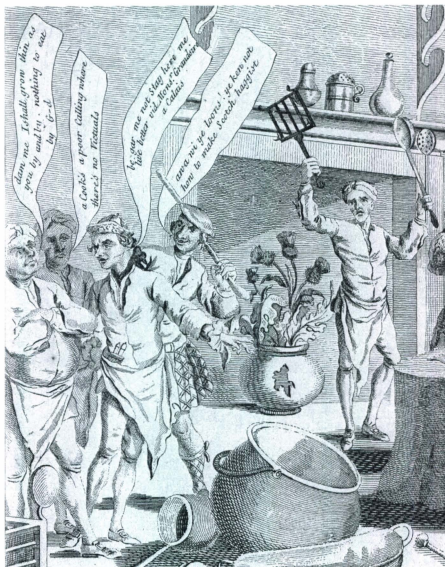


Figure 2.12. Detail from *A catalogue of the kitchen furniture of John Bull...* (ca. 1762) (BM Satires 3990), showing a skinny Scotsman chasing away three cooks because they "ken not how to make Scotch Haggist" (© Trustees of the British Museum)





Figure 2.13. Detail from *The peace-soup-makers....* (1762) (BM Satires 3882), showing Lord Bute (at left) as a “Cook from the Highlands” concocting a mess of “Pea-e Porridg[e] without flavour” (© Trustees of the British Museum)

unfavourable terms that Bute was in the process of negotiating for Britain in the Treaty of Paris (1763). This treaty marked the end of the Seven Years War with France, and was popularly referred to as the “Scotch Peace” (Stephens 1870-83, 4:c; cf. Colley 2003, 101-5; Langford 1990, 350-56). The print shows Bute, dressed in tartan garb, eating soup from a vat labelled “Pea-e Porrid[g]e without flavour by Sawney McBoot [i.e., Bute] Cook from the Highlands.” He pronounces it “very Gude Soup”; but Henry Fox, Bute’s Paymaster of the Forces (represented by a fox) warns that: “This Mess will never go down with with [*sic*] an English Stomack.” In the accompanying poem, the popular perception that Bute had promised unreasonable concessions to France at Britain’s expense is metaphorically attributed to the fact that he has been raised on a “mean” Scottish diet:

... my *Laird of the Boot*, us’d to Oatmeal and Water,  
To Crowdy and Gruel—knew nought of the Matter,  
Most strongly advis’d ’em with frugal Pretence,  
To leave out the *Seas’ning* and save the Expende.

Like *The kitchen furniture of John Bull*..., *The peace-soup-makers* thus exemplifies the way in which, as John Brewer writes, “hostility to the Scots and opposition to Bute worked in tandem.” On the one hand, “Bute’s conduct was used to confirm the popular conception of the Scots” – in this case, stereotypes concerning the supposed frugality of their national diet – while, on the other, “the prevailing view of the Scots was used to belabour Bute” (1973, 21; cf. Schweizer 1997, 7). Bute’s status as a “Bungler in Cook’ry” determined to “poison [the] Tastes” of the (British) nation is here represented as a direct corollary of his Scottish nationality. As the author of the accompanying poem writes: “who but a *Scotsman* cou’d relish such Stuff?”

Food-related imagery also features prominently in *The triumphal arch* (1763) (BM Satires 4046), which depicts the arch that the author of the accompanying poem facetiously proposes should be erected in celebration of the peace settlement negotiated by Bute in the Treaty of Paris (see Figure 2.14). At the very top of the structure, a proposed bas-relief representing Scotia – the personification of Scotland – occupies the place typically reserved for the figure of Plenty with her cornucopia (Stephens 1870-83, 4:273). Clad only in a tartan scarf, she throws a variety of Scottish delicacies to a group of hungry Scotsmen waiting eagerly below. As the accompanying verse explains:

This Arch to adorn,  
Needs no Plenty's Horn,  
For Plenty's an old-fashion'd Dowdy;  
But let *Scotia* bestow,  
On her Vot'ries below,  
Rich Haggist, Sheeps Heads, aye and Crowdy.

In "The Congress," another poem satirising the terms of the Treaty of Paris, the author similarly envisions the English populace adopting Scottish manners in mock gratitude to Bute for negotiating the Peace. Henceforth, the poem suggests, everyone will "[feed on] *Oatmeal Haggise.../ And Smithfield Beasts no more shall bleed*" (*British antidote...* [1763/64], 2:10). The mention of Smithfield, London's main cattle market, highlights the links between roast beef and English identity (see Rogers 2004, 13, 88); a stark contrast is drawn between the oatmeal content of the haggis and the blood-rich beef favoured by the English.



Figure 2.14. Detail from *The triumphal arch* (1763) (BM Satires 4046), showing Scotia, the personification of Scotland, bestowing "Rich Haggist, Sheep's Heads, ... and Crowdy" upon a group of hungry Scotsmen (© Trustees of the British Museum)

## Conclusion

This chapter has sought to unravel the complexities underlying the emergence of haggis's symbolic association with Scottishness in the mid to late eighteenth century. The folk history of the dish has tended to assume that it was not widely recognised as distinctively Scottish until the poet Robert Burns published his mock-heroic address "To a Haggis" in 1786. As I have argued, however, in order to trace the dish's evolving symbolic relationship with Scottishness it is necessary to look beyond the expressive culture of eighteenth-century Scotland itself, and to focus instead on that of England during the same period. The materials presented here have shown that within English cultural discourse the dish was increasingly portrayed as distinctively Scottish from at least the 1750s, undergoing a gradual process of othering by which it was constructed as an ethnically marked category in need of explication to English audiences. In this context, the dish was not only increasingly associated with the Scots, but was also emerging as a culinary stereotype that could be used to represent particular ideas about and attitudes towards Scottishness from an exoteric, English perspective. As such, the construction of haggis as distinctively Scottish within eighteenth-century English expressive culture was part of a much wider phenomenon, whereby stereotypes concerning their food and eating habits were used to stigmatise the Scots as England's closest ethnic Other.<sup>47</sup> Although haggis does not appear to have been incorporated into

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<sup>47</sup> For a discussion of similar stereotyping with regard to the Irish and the Welsh, see, for example, Bartley 1954.

this stereotypically Scottish diet until considerably later, the origins of this process can be traced back at least as far as the early 1600s.

In order fully to understand the complexities underlying the development of haggis and other culinary stereotypes of Scottishness, I have argued that it is necessary to interpret them in the wider context of the tensions that characterised Anglo-Scottish relations throughout the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. Prior to 1600 non-military contact between the Scots and the English was relatively rare, but in the wake of the regal union between the two countries in 1603, and especially following the parliamentary union of 1707, Scots increasingly enjoyed a visible and influential presence in the South. This led to the development of particular exoteric notions of Scottishness as constructed from an English perspective, as the Scots became familiar enough to caricature, yet remained sufficiently other to engender ongoing suspicion, resentment and, at times, outright xenophobia. The early years of the regal union saw the emergence of a new genre of satirical and abusive accounts of Scotland that can be interpreted, in part, as a direct response to the increasing prominence of the Scots in English life. These accounts remained popular well into the eighteenth century, being reissued on numerous occasions and plagiarised extensively by subsequent authors. The popularity in England of such satirical portrayals of the Scots appears to have peaked during times of particular tension in the relationship between the two countries. In these and subsequent accounts it is possible to trace the gradual crystallisation of various exoteric formulations of Scottishness, including that of the Scot as primitive barbarian. Often referred to in contemporary sources as the "beggarly Scot," this caricature effectively encapsulates a

range of ethnic stereotypes associating the Scots with poverty, primitiveness, dirt and disease.

I went on to explore the role of diet within the evolving English stereotype of the "beggarly Scot" during the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. The discussion was situated in the context of theories concerning the use of food and eating habits as markers of cultural difference or otherness. Specific reference was made to existing folkloristic work on ethnic food slurs in a variety of contexts, from food-based nicknames applied to ethnic groups, to ethnic jokes and contemporary legends. Two key themes that manifest themselves within many such food slurs are that of the perceived or actual poverty of the target group, as reflected in its diet; and the expression of fears concerning contaminated foods. In addition, many food slurs operate by figuratively dehumanising the ethnic Other, implying that those who eat differently from ourselves are somehow less than human. All of these themes can be identified at work within the anti-Scottish food slurs that developed within English cultural discourse during the period under investigation. Satirical portrayals of Scotland during this period usually represented it as a land of barrenness and famine, the antithesis of England's land of plenty. Where the Scots were depicted as anything other than starving, they were typically represented as eking out a meagre existence on stigmatised poverty foods that the English regarded as more suitable for animals. The stereotypically Scottish poverty food *par excellence* was oatmeal, a foodstuff that had been associated with the Scots since at least the fourteenth century. The wider cluster of culinary stereotypes of Scottishness that developed within English cultural discourse during the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries was similarly based on

conceptualisations of the Scottish diet as reflective of their alleged degradation and coarseness of living. Interpreted in this wider context, the incorporation of haggis into the stereotypical diet of the "beggarly Scot" from the mid 1700s was probably due to the fact that its ingredients include both oatmeal and offal, an "inferior" meat that provides a fitting contrast with the increasing prominence of roast beef as the key symbol of English culinary national identity during this period.

The final section explored how these evolving stereotypes concerning Scottish food and eating habits were used by English satirists to protest against the increasing influx of Scottish immigrants to the South following the parliamentary union of 1707, and especially during Lord Bute's premiership in the 1760s. In many contemporary satires, the perceived avarice of the careerist Scottish immigrants was figuratively portrayed as a physical hunger that could only be satiated by feasting on the fruits of English harvests. Animalistic metaphors, especially that of the locust, were similarly used as a means of representing the Scots' destructive voraciousness while also effectively contributing to their dehumanisation. Several satires depict Scottish immigrants rejoicing at the prospect of leaving behind the meagre diet of their native land, while others use culinary metaphors to depict the predicted impact of their allegedly excessive influence on the prosperity and wellbeing of the English themselves. References relating to diet and eating habits were also used to represent supposed national character traits of the Scots, such as meanness, as manifested particularly clearly in those satires that mock the Bute administration's most unpopular policies. Such satirical uses of emerging culinary stereotypes of Scottishness reflect the deep-seated



nature of English xenophobia towards their Northern neighbours during this period and the fear engendered by the Scots' allegedly excessive influence within the British state. As we will see in the next chapter, the culinary stereotypes of Scottishness that emerged during this period anticipate key themes in depictions of Scottish cookery within nineteenth- and twentieth-century British folk and popular culture, and beyond. Further investigation of this material thus promises to enhance our understanding of the development of cultural perceptions concerning Scottish food and eating habits that remain influential to this day.

### Chapter 3. Cannibalism, Contamination and the Carnavalesque: Grotesquing the Scottish Body in Expressive Culture about Haggis<sup>1</sup>

The previous chapter traced the emergence of haggis as a culinary stereotype of Scottishness within English cultural discourse during the mid to late eighteenth century, as part of a particular exoteric conceptualisation of Scottishness: that of the “beggarly Scot.” This chapter goes on to explore the expressive cultural materials that subsequently developed around the dish from the mid 1700s onwards, within both English and Scottish culture. I focus in particular on the motif of the grotesque body, arguing that it is among the most prominent themes within this corpus of materials. The first section explores how this theme emerged out of the exoteric construction of the beggarly Scottish body as not only emaciated but also as dirty and diseased. I go on to investigate two key ways in which the grotesque body motif manifests itself within the expressive cultural materials about haggis. Firstly, many expressive cultural depictions of the dish, as presented from both exoteric (English) and esoteric (Scottish) perspectives, are preoccupied with its physiological effects on the bodies of its consumers. Secondly, many such accounts portray the haggis *as* a grotesque body. I explore how within this second category, key metaphors used to depict the haggis include those of the foreign body, the diseased or contaminated body, and the cadaver. The chapter concludes with a brief consideration of the legendary haggis creature as a grotesque rendering of the Scottish body. Throughout,

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<sup>1</sup> The title of this chapter was probably unconsciously influenced by that of José Limón’s article “*Carne, carnales, and the carnivalesque*” (1989).

I argue that in such portrayals, the haggis stands in for the Scottish body itself, and that these depictions of the dish can therefore be read as encoding competing representations of Scottishness.

Most famously theorised by literary critic Mikhail Bakhtin in *Rabelais and his world* (1968), the grotesque body exists in opposition to the classical or civilised body. As Peter Stallybrass and Allon White explain: "Bakhtin was struck by the compelling difference between the human body as represented in popular festivity and the body as represented in classical statuary in the Renaissance. He noticed how the two forms of iconography 'embodied' utterly contrary registers of being" (1986, 21). The grotesque body represents a carnivalesque reversal of the hierarchy inscribed on the body by the ideology of bourgeois individualism, which, as Stallybrass and White observe, "finds *its* image and legitimization in the classical" (1986, 22). Thus the grotesque body is characterised by an emphasis on the materiality of the body rather than its spiritual, intellectual aspects. Accordingly, depictions of the grotesque body focus on what Bakhtin terms the "material lower bodily stratum" (1968, 368), including such features as the genitals, belly, bowels, buttocks, legs and feet, as well as on protuberances such as the phallus, breasts, potbelly and nose. A similar emphasis is placed on the orifices (mouth, nostrils, anus, pores), and on the bodily fluids (urine, faeces, semen, saliva, sweat, vomit, pus, phlegm). In other words, depictions of the grotesque body focus on the sites of interface between the body and the outside world, as opposed to the smoothness, closure and finish exemplified by the classical statue, which has no orifices (Stallybrass and White 1986, 9). Thus the grotesque body is often depicted in the act of breaking wind,

burping, hiccupping, yawning and spitting, and is also associated with food and feasting – with “abundance, hedonism and release” (Lupton 1996, 154; cf. Young 1993). As Deborah Lupton explains, in Western cultures “[t]he ‘civilized’ body is constructed as the body that is self-contained, that is highly socially managed and conforms to dominant norms of behaviour and appearance. By contrast, the ‘grotesque’ body is uncontained, unruly, less controlled by notions of propriety and good manners and is therefore regarded as more ‘animalistic’” (1996, 19). According to Lupton, in contemporary discourses surrounding food and social or cultural distinction, foods that are conceptualised as “bad” are often associated with the grotesque body and the carnivalesque (1996, 154).

In an article analysing Walter Scott’s *Malachi Malagrowther* letters (1826), Caroline McCracken-Flesher (1995/96) connects the concept of the grotesque body to expressive cultural representations of Scottishness by presenting a reading of Scott’s depiction of the colonised Scottish body politic as grotesque. McCracken-Flesher argues that within colonial discourse, “the colonized subject is first and foremost a body, specifically, a deformed and othered body, .... a body rendered grotesque not only by the colonial gaze but also by its own attempts to voice itself through colonial language” (1995/96, 74). The applicability of such a postcolonial analysis to Scotland is highly contentious, since the country has never technically been a colony, and its complicity with England in imperialism has meant that some postcolonial critics have dismissed it as

unworthy of attention.<sup>2</sup> Recognising this dilemma, McCracken-Flesher nonetheless contends that “when [Scotland] joined with England in the Act of Union of 1707, she brought herself within range of England’s inevitably colonizing power” (1995/96, 74-75). The materials presented in the previous chapter help to strengthen this analysis in relation to expressive culture, since they illustrate the dominance of negative English representations of Scottishness in effectively othering and dehumanising the Scots in the context of seventeenth- and eighteenth-century cultural discourse.

McCracken-Flesher goes on to present an analysis of Scott’s use of the grotesque body motif in the *Malachi Malagrowther* letters, describing how:

The colonized subject, spoken into colonial insignificance by its bodily difference, might logically seek to articulate itself around the body, that is, to ignore the body. Such a strategy, however, inevitably defeats itself, for in trying to avoid the malforming voicing of the body, the subject refuses its one point of articulation, that same grotesque body... Scott overcomes this problem not by avoiding the repulsive Scottish body, but by grasping it to him. Rather than shrinking from the body malformed by its colonial subjection, Scott acknowledges and occupies it..., and thus bodies it forth as grotesque excess so that it obtrudes into and cannot be contained by the colonial narrative. He speaks the native ... not by abjuring the subjected body, but by flaunting it. (1995/96, 74)

In this chapter, I argue that a similar conceptualisation of the Scottish body politic as grotesque features prominently within the corpus of expressive cultural materials about haggis that developed within both English and Scottish culture from the mid 1700s onwards.

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<sup>2</sup> For discussions of this issue, see, for example, Stefanie Lehner (2007), who argues that despite its inherent conceptual difficulties, “the very idea of a postcolonial Scotland fruitfully complicates the binary oppositioning which informs traditional conceptions of the colonial divide by showing the British metropolitan centre as comprising its own internal peripheries” (292).

I propose that the motif of the grotesque body in this context encodes a fundamental contestation of Scottishness as constructed from exoteric (English) and esoteric (Scottish) perspectives. On the one hand, accounts of the dish presented from an English perspective encode revulsion at the grotesqueness of the beggarly Scottish body and a concomitant fear of contamination or infection as a consequence of consuming foods that have been prepared by or otherwise come into contact with such bodies. From this perspective, as Lupton suggests, "[r]evulsion for the food eaten by another is a[n] ... expression of discrimination and xenophobia" (1996, 35), by which the Scots are rendered even more foreign in their grotesqueness. Yet the very fact that, as McCracken-Flesher suggests, "[the] fully-bodied colonized subject enjoys a circulation that threatens the colonizer with infection" (1995/96, 81), means that food in this instance has the potential to act as a locus for cultural expressions of resistance, of counterhegemony. Accordingly, I argue that those accounts presented from a Scottish perspective celebrate the grotesque excess of the Scottish body (as represented by the haggis) and its uncontainability within hegemonic discourses of Scottishness as constructed from an exoteric, English perspective. In other words, the motif of the grotesque body enables the Scots to resist such exoterically imposed stereotypes of Scottishness precisely by flaunting their grotesque, subjected bodies in the form of the haggis. It allows them, in McCracken-Flesher's words, "to represent Scotland as a plenitude of bodily difference, and thus to render it unnarratable, impossible to contain within narrowly colonial plots" (1995/96, 77).

### **Consuming the Beggarly Scottish Body: Dirt, Disease and the Fear of Contamination**

As the materials presented in the previous chapter illustrate, the construction of the stereotype of the “beggarly Scot” within seventeenth- and eighteenth-century English cultural discourse was, in part, based on a conceptualisation of the Scottish body as “deformed and othered” (cf. McCracken-Flesher 1995/96, 74). Half-starved, eking out a meagre existence on a diet of stigmatised poverty foods such as oatmeal and haggis, the beggarly Scottish body as depicted in the English satires of this period is emaciated, weak and cadaverous (cf. Atherton 1974, 210). The personification of Famine as a skeletal Scot driven to the verge of madness by hunger in Charles Churchill’s *Prophecy of famine* (1763a), and the portrayal of Lord Chancellor Alexander Wedderburn as the archetypal beggarly Scot in *Sawney Wetherbeaten or Judas Iscariot* (1792/93) (BM Satires 4100), provide particularly striking illustrations of the stereotype’s embodied nature (see Figures 2.3 and 2.10, above). The previous chapter explored how the emerging stereotypical dishes on which such bodies were allegedly fed, haggis included, were rooted in exotic conceptualisations of the inadequate quantity, inferior quality and monotony of the Scottish diet. In this sense, these evolving culinary stereotypes of Scottishness exemplify the first of the two key themes that were identified in the existing folkloristic research on ethnic food slurs as an expressive cultural genre: that of the actual or perceived poverty of the stigmatised group (cf. Davies 1990, 283).

However, the beggarly Scottish body as represented within English cultural discourse also exhibits two further, closely interrelated characteristics that have yet to be discussed: it is both a dirty and a diseased body. The narrator of the influential early satirical account *A perfect description of the people and country of Scotland* (1617), for example, offers the following description (referring to Scottish women, in particular): “their brethes commonly stinkes of pottage and their Lynnen of pisse, their hand of pigs turds, their whole bodies of Sweat, and their splay feet never offend in socks, To be chained in marriage to one of them were to be tyed to a dead Carkasse and cast into a stinking ditch” (quoted in Waurechen 2011, 5). A similarly memorable passage appears in the personal correspondence of Thomas Windebank, an Englishman who fought in Scotland during the Bishops’ Wars of 1638–40. Windebank describes the enemy army as:

those scurvy, filthy, durty, nasty, lousie, itchy, scabby, shitten, stinking, slovenly, snotty nos’d loggerheaded foolish, insolent, proud, beggarly, impertinent, absurd, proud-headed, villainous, barbarous, bestiall, false, lying, rogueish, divelish, long ear’d short hair’d, damnable, Athisticall, puritanical Crue of the Scotch Covenant. [all *sic*] (quoted in Waurechen 2011, 123)<sup>3</sup>

The first eleven of the derogatory adjectives that feature in Windebank’s rant are clustered around notions of uncleanness: the Scots are “filthy, durty, nasty, ... shitten [i.e., shitty], stinking, slovenly [and] snotty nos’d,” and of disease or infestation: they are

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<sup>3</sup> The manuscript is housed in the National Archives in London, SP 16/424/50 (Waurechen 2011, 123).



"scurvy [*sic*], ... lousie, itchy [and] scabby."<sup>4</sup> The itch, or scabies, was virtually synonymous with the figure of the beggarly Scot during this period, to the extent that it was often referred to as the *Scotch itch* or *Scotch fiddle*, the latter deriving from the action of working one's index finger like a fiddlestick between the fingers of the other hand in an attempt to relieve the itching caused by the disease (Grose 1785, n. pag.; cf. Partridge 1984, 1021).<sup>5</sup> Indeed, Francis Grose records *Itchland*, *Scratchland* and *Louseland* as derogatory epithets for Scotland in the colloquial English of the 1780s (1785, n. pag.).

Because scabies was believed to be caused by poor hygiene (cf. Atherton 1974, 211), perceptions concerning the personal uncleanliness and slovenly living conditions of the beggarly Scots were closely intertwined with those concerning their collective ill-health. Both the Scot-as-Famine and Alexander Wedderburn as Sawney Wetherbeaten (Figures 2.3 and 2.10, above) are clearly afflicted by scabies: both are scratching

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<sup>4</sup> Although Alexander Fenton, apparently referring to the eighteenth century, notes that scurvy was widespread in Scotland at all levels of society (2007, 62), I have not seen any other reference to it in the anti-Scottish satires of the period.

<sup>5</sup> Among the most common sites for the rash caused by the body's allergic reaction to infestation by scabies mites are the folds of skin between the fingers and toes. Geoffrey Hughes suggests that the term *Scotch fiddle* was "also a euphemism for venereal disease" (2006, 411), which would accord with the common tendency to sexualise the ethnic Other. This tendency can clearly be seen in the overtly sexualised portrayals of Lord Bute, and of the Scots in general, in the anti-Scottish satires of the 1760s (cf. Colley 2003, 121-22). As Linda Colley writes, the longstanding belief that the Scottish Highlanders, in particular, were "unusually well endowed sexually ... reflect[s] the fact that – like blacks in the American south – they were seen as both threatening and primitive" (2003, 395). It is likely that some confusion existed between scabies (caused by mites so small as to be almost invisible to the naked eye) and infestation with head lice or pubic lice (i.e., crabs), both of which are significantly larger. Confusion with the latter condition, in particular, would help to explain the association with venereal disease.

themselves; the scabs or sores caused by the scratching are visible on Famine's skin; and Sawney Wetherbeaten is availing himself of a scrubbing-post, a device featured in many anti-Scottish satires of the period as a source of relief for itchy Scots. The centrality of scabies to the stereotype of the beggarly Scot is encapsulated in the following stanzas from the London broadside ballad "The curse of Scotland" [ca. 1707?]:

If you should go to Scotland, and leave your native home,  
Be sure you take with you hogs-lard, brimstone and a currycomb,  
For if you chance to catch the itch, *as all the Scotchmen have*,  
They catch it in their cradle, and carry it to their grave.

If you should chance to catch the itch, anoint yourselves full well,  
And rub it in, and scrub it in, but you must not mind the smell,  
If you stink worse than an old polecat, and think you are perfum'd,  
They'll think you've been at Edinborough dance [*sic*], or grand assembly  
room.

(Curse of Scotland [ca. 1707?], stanzas 2 and 4, emphasis added; cf. Holloway and Black 1975, 79-80)

Hogs-lard and brimstone (i.e., sulphur), the latter often in combination with milk or butter, were common contemporary treatments for scabies. Thus the fictional map of Scotland in *The political senses....* (1768) (BM Satires 4234), for example, features "Brimstone Houses," as well as "Scrubbing Posts" (see Figure 2.2, above).

Like its associations with poverty, conceptualisations of the beggarly Scottish body as both dirty and diseased manifest themselves particularly clearly in satirical portrayals of Scottish food and eating habits. In this sense, too, these exoteric alimentary stereotypes of Scottishness exemplify a pattern that has been identified in much of the existing folkloristic research on ethnic food slurs in other cultural contexts. A prominent characteristic of many such slurs is their tendency to ascribe an "essentialised dirtiness"

(Redmond 2009, [1]) to the target group, often accompanied by a fear of contamination or contagion on the part of those transmitting the slur. In his work on anti-Mexican food slurs in South Texas, for instance, Mario Montaña writes that "Mexican food symbolized everything that was degenerate and despicable about the conquered Mexican population," with Anglos viewing "both Mexicans and their food as dirty, contaminated, and unhygienic" (1997, 51, 52). Clare Sammells, meanwhile, discusses how urban legends about llama meat in the city of La Paz, Bolivia, are similarly centred on notions of uncleanness and a fear of disease. Sammells describes how "[i]n modern La Paz, the belief that the poor and indigenous people are dirty and unsanitary complements the perception that the foods most closely associated with them, such as llama meat, carry disease" (1998, 27).<sup>6</sup> The urban legends told by the city's non-indigenous residents also reflect a fear of unknowingly consuming llama as a consequence of the practice of "meat switching," whereby both llama and dog meat are believed to be regularly substituted illegally for other meats by lower-class eating establishments and indigenous street vendors (1998, 34). Through meat-switching, as Sammells suggests, "llama meat becomes a way for the lower class to pollute the upper class," for the diseased and dirty ethnic Other to pollute the non-indigenous self (1998, 38).

Sean Redmond, meanwhile, presents a similar argument with reference to a very different context: the "race row" that erupted in the British media during the 2007 season of the popular reality TV show *Celebrity Big Brother*, in reaction to the racist abuse to

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<sup>6</sup> Ironically, Sammells points out that "[t]he taboo against eating inferior 'Indian' food such as llama meat has, in time, led to low sanitation and inspection standards that further justify the taboo" (1998, 30).

which three of the white, British-born contestants subjected one of their competitors, Indian film star Shilpa Shetty. Redmond argues that the race row “centred, in part, on the preparation, handling and consumption of food”; he goes on to explore how the ritual of cooking and dining among the contestants, who live together for the duration of the series, “was employed to establish racial difference and to construct the racial Other as unclean.” As he writes: “White and British-born Jade, Jo and Danielle deciding to eat/not eat Indian became a symbol of bordered, racialised self identity, and a site of potential corporeal pollution if one tasted, touched, consumed the food prepared by foreign Shilpa’s ‘filthy hands’” (2009, [1]).

Satirical depictions of the food and eating habits of the beggarly Scots from the early 1600s onwards encode a similar assessment of the Scottish body as both dirty and diseased. The narrator of the *Perfect description*.... (1617), for example, remarks on the “foul dishes and pots, foul trenchers and napkins” that the members of King James’s entourage were allegedly obliged to use while dining in Scotland. He goes on to describe the food in greater detail, emphasising the slovenliness and filth of the natives: “They have good store of fish too, and good for those that can eat it raw; but if it come once into their hands, it is worse than if it were three days old: for their butter and cheese, I will not meddle withal at this time, nor no man else at any time that loves his life” (quoted in Brown 1970, 97). The author of *A description of Scotland, and its inhabitants* (1705) writes that:

For their Cookery...., they [the Scots] are the Antipodes of all cleanly Folks. Can you like to breakfast upon *Steen Bannock*? (An oaten Cake, often baked upon my Hostess’s warm Wemb [*stomach*].) Or drink ropy Ale, that is full as palpable, as ever the *Egyptian* Darkness was? Would it

please you to see a Joint of Meat ready to run away from you? And yet such must be your Entertainment there. (B. 1705, 3)

Thomas Kirke (1679) offers a similarly negative assessment of the quality of Scottish meat, alleging that it is left to sit until putrid and swarming with flies, before being served in rancid butter<sup>7</sup>:

[the] cuke[s] of this country ... can sute every dish with its proper hogoe [*taste*], and bring corruption to your table, only to mind men of mortality. Their meat is carrion when 'tis killed, but after it has been a fortnight a perfuming with the aromatick air, strained thro' the clammy trunks of flesh flies, then it passes the tryal of fire under the care of one of those exquisite artists, and is dish'd up in a sea of sweet [i.e., rancid] Scotch butter, and so cover'd and served hot up to the table. (quoted in Brown 1970, 262-63)

Similarly, the poetic "Character of Scotland" published in the *British antidote to Caledonian poison* warns that the unwary traveller to the country can expect to be "poison'd when he eats and drinks,/ Or flavour'd with all kinds of stinks" (*British antidote*.... [1763/64], 1:3). In these examples, the conceptualisation of the beggarly Scottish body as dirty and diseased is transferred onto their food itself.

Perhaps the ultimate manifestation of the grotesqueness of the beggarly Scottish body in relation to food and eating habits is Kirke's allegation that the Scots are wont to consume their own excrement. As he writes: "The poorer sort ... have [p]rodidigious stomachs, that, like the gulon, can feed on their own excrements, and strain their meat through their stomachs, to have the pleasure of devouring it again" (quoted in Brown 1970, 262-63). The gulon is a creature in Scandinavian legendry that is used as a symbol

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<sup>7</sup> Fenton points out that "butter figured prominently in [Scottish] cooking" of this period, as it "had preservative qualities in excluding air from cooked meat and poultry dishes" (2007, 123-24).

of gluttony because of its "extraordinary ... voracity" (Brown 1970, 263). It is said to push its meat through its own body by squeezing itself between two trees, before consuming the meat a second time. A similar equation of the stereotypical Scottish diet with excrement is encoded in the name of the fictional Scottish eating-house discussed in Chapter 2. Most of the broadside versions of the proposals for setting up this establishment refer to it as a "Scotch eating house" or "North Country ordinary." Taken in combination, these two titles are clearly suggestive of the epithet *Scotch ordinary*, a term with an alternative meaning in contemporary colloquial English that is essential to an understanding of the satire in this case.<sup>8</sup> An *ordinary* was an inn, public house or tavern where meals were provided at a fixed price, or the room in such a building where this type of meal was provided (*OED*). However, the term *Scotch ordinary* was used ironically during this period to refer to a toilet (Peacock 1984, 1022; cf. Ray 1737, 63).<sup>9</sup> Jonathon Green suggests that "the implication, presumably, is that while other people offer food in an ordinary, the mean Scots offer only its waste product" (1996, 188).<sup>10</sup> More precisely, I would argue, the epithet implies that what the Scots

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<sup>8</sup> As discussed in Chapter 2, "North Country" clearly also implies *Scotch* (either referring to Scotland itself, in the London versions of the satire, or to the Ulster Scots, in the Dublin versions).

<sup>9</sup> This epithet exemplifies the second category of ethnic slurs (other than derogatory nicknames for ethnic persons and groups) identified by Irving Lewis Allen, that is, ethnic derogation in the form of metaphors. Food-related examples listed by Allen include *Irish spoon* for a shovel, *Italian perfume* for garlic, and *Dutch steak* for cheap hamburger (1983a, 11).

<sup>10</sup> In a similar way, Redmond writes that in the context of the *Celebrity Big Brother* race row, Shilpa was constructed by the other contestants as "the foreign-

consider food, the English consider excrement. This constitutes an even more extreme dehumanising device than Samuel Johnson's dietary comparison between Scots and horses (see Chapter 2), since even animals would stop short of eating faeces.

The double meaning encoded in the name of the eating-house is reinforced by the prominence of scatological references within the account of the establishment's opening night. The "Hillock o' Butter" served as part of the first course, for example, is likened to "*a wee Middin*," or dunghill (Carson 1744, 43). The penultimate stanza of the narrator's satirical poem in praise of the haggis is similarly scatological in nature:

<i>I wonder that Dritten K——k [sic] J——es,</i>	shitty/dirty, [King James]
<i>Did not mak Haggis a Lord,</i>	
<i>Sine he was sae free o' his Honours,</i>	since, so
<i>That some say he Knighted a T——rd.</i>	[turd]

(Carson 1744, 44, stanza 4)

The rhyme scheme of this verse effects an obvious equivalence between the haggis, which the poet facetiously suggests ought to have received a knighthood, and the turd that is rumoured to have been so honoured.<sup>11</sup> The degradation implied by the toilet humour is further exaggerated by the reference to the person bestowing the honours as "Dritten [i.e., shitty] King James." "Séamas an chaca," or James the beshitten, was a widely used nickname among the Irish for James II of England (VII of Scotland)

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foreigner whose body and ethical centre resides in the manufacture of excrement" (2009, [8]).

<sup>11</sup> In a similar way, Davies writes that much of the ethnic humour surrounding sausages stems from their "comic turdlike or phallic form" (1990, 301).

following his abandonment of his Irish supporters in the wake of the Battle of the Boyne in 1690, when he fled to exile in France (Szechi 1994, 48; Ó Ciardha 2002, 83).<sup>12</sup>

Moreover, most of the broadside versions of the "Proposals" refer to the proposed eating-house as incorporating a "Scotch chocolate house," a reference to another epithet with an alternative meaning in contemporary colloquial English, this time encoding the exoteric conceptualisation of the beggarly Scottish body as diseased or infested. Chocolate houses proliferated in London and other European cities during the late seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, functioning, much like coffeehouses, as centres for political factions and thus as the precursors of modern clubs (Gordon 2009, 584). The term *Scotch chocolate*, however, referred to a mixture of brimstone and milk, which, as discussed above, was a common treatment for scabies, that stereotypically Scottish ailment (Grose 1785, n. pag.). As with *Scotch ordinary*, contemporary readers would presumably have been aware of this ironic alternative usage and the stereotypical perception of the Scots that underlay it. It is in this light that we must read the narrator's proposals that "*Scotch Cholate* [sic]" should be "the stauin [sic] [standing] dish" (i.e., permanently on the menu), and that "ilkie ean shall hea a foo *Scotch Pint* o' my Chocolate [*everyone shall have a full Scotch Pint of my Chocolate*]" (Carson 1744, 38). Similarly, awareness of the double meaning of *Scotch chocolate* must have enhanced contemporary readers' appreciation of the satire in passages such as the following,

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<sup>12</sup> The reference to James being "*free o' his Honours*" probably alludes to the fact that during the 1680s he had restored the lands that had been confiscated from Irish landowners by the English Commonwealth regime in the 1650s, as well as readmitting Catholics to various public offices.



describing the first course served to guests at the official opening of the eating-house: "In the middle o' the Table was a mickle man Dish broader than the Table, foo o' *Scotch Jocolate*, that brak three Spurtles in the makin o't; na, sure I am, it wad ferry a Body our the *Ban Water*" [all *sic*] (Carson 1744, 42-43).<sup>13</sup>

Just as the names given to the fictional eating-house in these two satires encode the conceptualisation of the beggarly Scottish body as both dirty and diseased, so accounts by early English travellers of their experiences in Scotland often express concerns about foods that have been polluted by dirt or disease as a result of having come into contact with such bodies during their preparation or serving. Writing about his travels in Scotland in 1725, for example, Captain Edward Burt recounts an occasion on which, "[b]eing a Stranger, I was invited to sup at a Tavern. The Cook was too filthy an Object to be described, only another *English Gentleman* whispered me and said, he believed, if the Fellow was to be thrown against the Wall, he would stick to it" ([Burt] 1754, 1:21). A similar passage, embellished with disgusting details, appears in *John English's travels through Scotland*, a fictional travel account published circa 1760, which plagiarises extensively from Burt's *Letters*, Kirke's *Modern account*, and various other sources (cf. Rackwitz 2007, 125). In Edinburgh, John English's travelling companion, Mr. Cornwal [*sic*], visits one of the "Best Taverns of the Town," where he meets a fellow

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<sup>13</sup> Approximate translation: "In the middle of the Table was a mickle man [possibly *man-mickle*, i.e., man-sized] Dish broader than the Table, full of *Scotch Chocolate*, that broke three spurtles [long-handled, flat-bladed implements for turning oatcakes, scones, etc (*CSD*)] in the making of it; na, sure I am, it would ferry a Person over the *Ban Water* [presumably the River Bann in present-day Northern Ireland]."

Englishman who “tipt me the Wink, to go into the Kitchen, and see the Preparation for our Supper” (English [ca. 1760?], 53). He continues:

There were displayed all the Powers of stinking Butter, bearded with Hair, accompanied with Nastiness and Filth.

There stood a Cook oll [*sic*] over besmeared as with a fætid Oil, twisting round in his Hand, a Towel that Time could not dirty more, enwrought with excrementitious digtal [*sic*] Impressions and collaterally larded with Candle Grease. (53-54)

Meanwhile, on another occasion, Burt recounts how he sought lodging at an inn in Kelso, in the Scottish Borders, where he was served a meal of potted pigeons at a table laid with a greasy tablecloth:

When I came to examine my Cates [*victuals*], there were two or three of the Pigeons lay mangled in the Pot, and behind were the Furrows, in the Butter, of those Fingers that had raked them out of it, and the Butter itself needed no close Application to discover its Quality.

My Disgust at this Sight was so great, and being a brand-new Traveller in this Country, I eat [*sic*] a Crust of Bread, and drank about a Pint of good Claret; and although the Night was approaching, I called for my Horses, and marched off.... ([Burt] 1754, 1:17)

A particularly notable feature of such accounts is the way in which the bodily presence of the beggarly Scots is physically imprinted onto their food and the implements used to prepare and serve it. The marks of the fingers that had raked Burt's pigeons out of it are still visible in the butter; the butter in Mr. Cornwal's account is literally “bearded with Hair,” and the cook's filthy towel is encrusted with “excrementitious dig[ital] Impressions.” A similar motif appears in some of the satirical accounts mentioned earlier in this chapter. The “*Steen Bannocks*” referred to by the author of *A description of Scotland, and its inhabitants*, for example, were allegedly baked using the heat of his hostess's own body, with her stomach as a griddle (B. 1705, 3). Similarly, the fish

described by the narrator of the *Perfect description*.... (1617) is considered palatable only until it has been touched by the persons preparing it, at which point “it is worse than if it were three days old” (quoted in Brown 1970, 97). Physical contact with dirty, diseased Scottish bodies is thus figured as corrupting their food, which bears the traces of such contact as a reminder to the English traveller to be wary of consuming it.

An even more striking example occurs a few pages later in John English’s account. Like Mr. Cornwall, the narrator, this time John English himself, describes stealing a glimpse into the kitchen of an Edinburgh tavern (a Goffmanesque backstage zone) to witness the preparation of the food he has just tasted. His depiction of the incident reads as follows:

when I asked for Bread, some *Baunock* was given to me, which the slattern Landlady, and as nasty as Filth could make her, told me was excellent in its Kind, and that they were baking more in the next Room. Hunger having compelled me to eat a Little, which I took Care to frequently moisten with my Rum and Water; then Curiosity egged me, to have a Peep through a Hole in the Partition, to view their Manner of baking. The Object that presented itself to me, was the Landlady wiping with her Hand, the scabby Arse of a young Child, covered with Squitter [*diarrhoea*], which, to save her Laziness the Trouble of getting a Cloth to wipe her own Hand with, she dabbed into the Dough. This is a new Kind of *Scotch* Yeast, discovered for the Art of baking, unknown to us of the South. I laid down my Money to pay for what I had, ran out of the House, and have since almost puked my Guts out. (English [ca. 1760?], 56-57)

Here we have an eighteenth-century narrative that mirrors the cycle of contemporary legends dealing with foods that have been deliberately contaminated by a variety of typically diseased bodily fluids – saliva, urine, ejaculate or, as here, diarrhoea – thereby infecting their unwitting consumers; more recent versions of this cycle have been cogently analysed by Janet Langlois (1991). As in most other versions belonging to this

cycle, the fact that the protagonist-victim has already sampled the food in question prior to discovering the contamination is a key feature of the narrative, compounding the horror of the realisation and the victim's nauseated reaction (cf. Langlois 1991).

**"I woe it gars my wame to turn"<sup>14</sup>: Haggis's Effect on the Body**

It is in the context of the above discussion of the beggarly Scottish body as dirty and diseased, and the way in which this notion finds expression in contemporary anti-Scottish food slurs, that we must interpret the first main manifestation of the grotesque body motif within the corpus of expressive cultural materials about haggis that began to develop during this period: their preoccupation with the dish's physiological effects on the bodies of its consumers. It might be assumed that expressive cultural portrayals of such effects simply provided yet another way for the cultural outsider to mock the beggarly Scot. Certainly, examples exist that appear to operate in this way. The satirical poem in praise of the haggis in the account of the grand opening of the fictional North Country ordinary, for instance, includes a vivid depiction of the dish's colourful effects on the bodies of its unfortunate Scottish consumers:

<i>Altho ye wad swallow the Haggis,</i>	although you would
<i>Doon to the Doup o' yer Weam,</i>	down to the pit of your stomach
<i>It wad struggle and wamble within ye,</i>	roll about (nauseatingly)
<i>And wark itsel 'boonmest again.</i>	work itself topmost

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<sup>14</sup> Translation: "I declare it makes my stomach turn" (P. 1909, 426; see the analysis of this text below).

<i>Altho' ye war riving wee Wond,</i>	with wind
<i>The Haggis wad mend ye I know,</i>	
<i>And drive it a frae ye like Brattles,</i>	all from you, rattles
<i>Of Thunder, aboon and below.</i>	above [i.e., thunderclaps]

(Carson 1744, 43-44, stanzas 2-3)

An English satirical print from 1811, meanwhile, shows a Scotsman in training for a milling match, or prize-fight; his fighting apparatus is visible in the background (see Figure 3.1). Arranged along the floor in the foreground is a variety of stereotypically Scottish foods, including Scotch barley, oatmeal, sheep's heads, haggis, kale, Scotch broth, gruel, oatcakes and bannocks. The fighter's trainer, wearing a tartan bonnet crowned with a giant thistle, is using a pair of bellows to feed the flames beneath a cauldron full of crowdie. Hanging from a hook beside the hearth is a "Scotch Fiddle," presumably intended as a reference to the itch, and on a shelf above it is a container labelled "Flour of Brimstone"; a mangy dog is scratching itself in the background. The boxer has his breeches pulled down and is squatting over a wooden bucket, evidently afflicted with a severe case of diarrhoea; another bucket is visible behind a curtain that has been rigged up in a vain attempt to preserve his modesty. He cries out: "Oh\_\_my Guts\_\_Capt" dont you think I am reduced enough," to which the captain replies, in mock Scots vernacular: "Hoot awa' man, another muckle mess of Crowdye, and a few Doses of Scotch Pills, will do your business" (E[lmes] 1811).<sup>15</sup> The double meaning underlying the euphemism of "doing one's business" needs little further explanation.

<sup>15</sup> Kate Arnold-Forster and Nigel Tallis suggest that the "Scotch Pills" referenced in this print "are probably the well-known Anderson's Scots Pills, a cathartic, produced from c. 1635 until the early twentieth century, containing aloes, anise, jalap, myrrh and gamboge" (1989, 36; cf. Timbs [1861], 216).



In both of these examples, which are clearly intended for an exoteric audience, the grotesque spectacle of the nauseated Scottish body, burping, breaking wind and defecating uncontrollably, with the haggis and other stereotypically Scottish dishes rolling around inside it, functions as one more means to belittle and further dehumanise the Scots. In exaggerating the "comic inferiority" of their diet, such examples mock the Scots' own comic inability to choose foods with less disastrous physiological consequences, as well as their primitive barbarism in the context of "a mannered and hierarchical society which stresses the orderly control of bodily functions and body boundaries" (cf. Davies 1990, 283, 291).<sup>16</sup>

Rather than depicting their effects on *Scottish* bodies, however, many of the exoteric depictions of haggis and other stereotypically Scottish dishes focus instead on the bodies of those from south of the Border who find themselves forced, for one reason or another, to sample them. As the examples presented in the previous section suggest, the narrators of the early English travelogues often profess themselves literally unable to stomach the Scottish foods encountered on their travels. We saw above, for instance, how John English claims to have "almost puked [his] guts out" after witnessing the

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<sup>16</sup> An interesting parallel can be identified here between the bodies of the Scots rolling around in their nauseated state and the haggises rolling around nauseatingly inside them. A similar parallel between haggis and eater can also be seen at work in the following extract from a burlesque of James Macpherson's *Ossian*, originally published in the *Hibernian Chronicle* (Cork, Ireland) in April 1770: "Why wakes Gregor? red-haired Gregor son of Fergus? As the fat haggis, when boiling in an earthen pot, rolls here and there, inquiet rolls, and dashes all about the greasy wave, so the son of Fergus, by wooly blanket covered, tossed and tumbled, and thro' his red locks the breezes of the night whistled" ("Crito" 1771, 63). See further the discussion of haggises and other Scottish foods being conflated with their eaters, below.

preparation of the bannocks he had just sampled. When he recounts this incident to Mr. Cornwall, the mere description of it is enough to give the latter diarrhoea: he complains that “the horrid Image has set my Bowels a wambling [*twisting*]; one Touch more would send me a cascading” (English [ca. 1760?], 57-58). Mr. Cornwall similarly describes the “nauseatingly besmeared Turnips,” “deluged” with “nasty Butter,” which he had been served the same evening, and which, he states, “almost turned my Stomach” (English [ca. 1760?], 51-52). In Tobias Smollett’s novel *The expedition of Humphry Clinker* (1771), intended as a satire on English prejudices against Scotland and the Scots, one of the English characters, Jerry Melford, describes a meal that he and his companions attended in Edinburgh during their tour of Scotland, at which a haggis was among the dishes served. He describes how “the [haggis], being a mess of minced lights [*lungs*], livers, suet, oat-meal, onions, and pepper, inclosed in a sheep’s stomach, had a very sudden effect upon mine, and the delicate Mrs Tabby changed colour; when the cause of our disgust was instantaneously removed at the nod of our entertainer” (Smollett 1985, 259). As Alex Tyrrell, Patricia Hill, and Diane Kirkby observe, this scene is “an early version of what would become the stock encounter in life as well as literature between haggis-eating Scots and their histrionically disgusted English visitors” (2007, 47).<sup>17</sup>

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<sup>17</sup> As mentioned above, it is important to note that Smollett, a Scot, is “us[ing] the haggis as a satirical device for deriding the Scottophobia that was widespread in England” (Tyrrell, Hill, and Kirkby 2007, 48). In other words, he is occupying the English perspective in order to satirise it, just as the English satirists themselves had used haggis and other emerging alimentary stereotypes of Scottishness to mock the “beggarly Scots.”



A similar account of the dire consequences of consuming haggis is given in a review of what was probably the best-known nineteenth-century Scottish cookbook, Meg Dods's *Cook and housewife's manual*, first published in 1826 (cf. Monnickendam 2005; Perkins 2000). Indeed, according to the author of the review, which was published in the *London Literary Gazette*, it is not even necessary to eat the dish in order to suffer such ill effects. "The mere description of [haggis]," he suggests, "is enough to do more to ordinary and well-organized bowels, than ipecacuanha, or the newly invented poison-pump" (Review.... 1826, 449).<sup>18</sup> A reviewer of Dods's *Manual* for another London magazine, meanwhile, expresses the hope that "we ... shall never ... be induced to peril our existence" by actually tasting the dish (Review.... 1827, 48). A particularly rich expression of this theme is contained in a poem by "G. L.," entitled "The Sassenach [Southerner/Englishman] at St. Andrew's dinner," originally published circa 1884.<sup>19</sup> The title refers to the annual celebrations held among Scottish communities worldwide to mark the feast-day of Scotland's patron saint, which were probably equally as popular as Burns Suppers (if not more so) until well into the nineteenth century. Textual and contextual evidence suggests that the dinner depicted in the poem is taking place somewhere in the North of England, but that all the guests except one – the "Sassenach" of the title – are Scottish. The poem is a parody of Burns's "Bruce to his men at

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<sup>18</sup> Ipecacuanha is a herbal extract used to cause vomiting and increased production of sputum (*OED*).

<sup>19</sup> The poem was submitted to *Notes and Queries* in 1909 with a note to the effect that it had appeared in "a Northern [i.e., northern English?] local newspaper of some twenty-five years ago" (P. 1909, 426).

Bannockburn" (1793), better known by the opening words of its first line, "Scots, wha hae"<sup>20</sup>,

- |   |  |
|---|--|
| 1) Scots wha hae wi' Andrew fed!<br>Scots for wham thae pairtricks bled!<br>Hoo was ye when ye gaed to bed?<br>A wee drap in your e'e.                        | <i>who have<br/>whom, those partridges<br/>how were you, went<br/>drop, eye [i.e., tipsy]</i>          |
| 2) See the tatties and bashed neeps!<br>See thae singit heids o' sheep!<br>(I wou it gars the flesh ta creep<br>O' a southron loon like me.)                  | <i>potatoes, mashed turnips<br/>sing'd heads<br/>declare, makes, to<br/>southern lad</i>               |
| 3) Disna' the haggis mak' ye burn?<br>Aw puddins else I ken ye spurn<br>(I wou it gars my wame to turn<br>Tapsalteeriee).                                     | <i>doesn't<br/>all other puddings, know<br/>makes my stomach<br/>topsy-turvy</i>                       |
| 4) Losh man! the doo tairt's unco' fine,<br>The Bubbly Jocks aw in a line,<br>An' Athol brose as weel as wine<br>An' honest barley bree.                      | <i>gosh! pigeon pie, remarkably<br/>turkeys<br/>[i.e., honey or meal mixed<br/>whisky with whisky]</i> |
| 5) Fill [up] your wames, blaw oot your cheeks!<br>Set free the wesban's o' your breeks!<br>(I ken I'll no' be weel for weeks,<br>I think I'll turn an' flee.) | <i>blow out<br/>waistbands, trousers<br/>well</i>  |
| 6) This usquebae aye maks me queer,<br>The speeches gran' I canna hear,<br>I think I'm drappin' aff my cheer.<br>Hech! whaur's the tippence?                  | <i>whisky always<br/>grand, cannot<br/>dropping off my chair<br/>ach! where's the weak ale</i>         |
| 7) Before I'm fou I'll end my sang.<br>May aw your lives be unco' lang!<br>Ye're the bravest chieles I've been amang<br>Although ye've pizzened me.           | <i>full/drunken, song<br/>long<br/>finest fellows, among<br/>poisoned</i>                              |
| 8) We greet ta say oor frien' is deid,<br>He couldna stan' oor haggis feed.   | <i>lament/weep, our, dead<br/>couldn't stand</i>   |

<sup>20</sup> For comparison, the text of Burns's original is given in Appendix B.

Lord, keep us aw <i>this</i> side o' Tweed,	[i.e., in England]
Far fra' oor ain countree.	<i>from our own</i>

(P. 1909, 426)

The comparison of the St. Andrew's Night feast, at which the English guest is ultimately defeated by the Scottish menu, to one of the greatest victories in Scottish military history, the defeat of the English army of Edward I at Bannockburn in 1314, is typical of the hyperbole that characterises such accounts. This is illustrated particularly clearly in the parodist's take on Burns's lines "See the front o' battle lour:/ See approach proud Edward's pow'r—," in which the terrifying vision of the approaching enemy army in all its might is replaced with that of potatoes (*tatties*), mashed turnips (*bashed neeps*) and singed sheep's heads (stanza 2). In a similar vein, the image of countless Scots sacrificing their lives in the Wars of Independence is replaced by that of partridges (*pairicks*) being "bled" in preparation for the feast (stanza 1). In a further echo of Burns's original, in which Bruce challenges would-be traitors and cowards to "turn and flee," the Sassenach complains: "I ken I'll no' be weel for weeks/ I think I'll turn an' flee" (stanza 5). Similarly, the theme of freedom that recurs throughout Burns's original as a rallying-cry to the Scottish army is comically echoed here by the Sassenach's urge to "[s]et free the [wesban] o' [his] breeks!" (stanza 5). As these last two quotations suggest, the emphasis throughout the poem is on the physiological effects of the feast on the body of the unfortunate "Southron loon." The mere sight of the tatties, neeps and sheep's heads makes his flesh creep (stanza 2); the haggis makes him "burn" and turns his stomach (stanza 3); the whisky makes him "queer," dulls his senses ("The speeches gran' I canna hear"), and renders him unable to control his own movements, until eventually he

falls off his chair (stanza 6). He concludes by wishing longevity to his Scottish hosts, despite his claim that they have “pizzened [*poisoned*]” him (stanza 7). In the final stanza the perspective abruptly shifts to that of the Scots themselves, who report the distressing news that, unable to stand their “haggis feed,” their friend has died (stanza 8). Another haggis-related parody punning on a line from Burns’s “Bruce to his men at Bannockburn” features in a postcard reproduced in the *Burnsian* newsletter as part of the “Deltiology of Robert Burns” series (see Figure 3.2). In the postcard, which is set at a Burns Supper, a Burns enthusiast addresses a town provost, in his chains of office, “who has partaken rather Bumptuously [*sic*] of the Haggis.” He states: “Mr. Provost, you remind me of a line in ‘Scots Wha Hae’ ... Chains and Slaverie!” (see Westwood 1993, 71).

“The Sassenach at St. Andrew’s dinner” provides a particularly clear illustration of the way in which, in many such accounts, the haggis and other stereotypically Scottish dishes are depicted as “monsters” that appear to take on lives of their own, violently inflicting themselves on the bodies of their English eaters. Thus Peter Prig, the narrator of a fictional travel account published in a London periodical in 1820, describes the singed sheep’s head with turnips that he was served on his first night over the Scottish Border as a “monster of a thing.” He goes on to complain that the haggis “almost suffocated” him, while the whisky which accompanied his meal “took me so powerfully by the throat, that I thought it would have suffocated me again” ([McDonogh] 1820,



Figure 3.2. "Chains and Slaverie!": A postcard punning on a line from Burns's "Bruce to his men at Bannockburn" ("Scots wha hae") to poke fun at a town provost "who has partaken rather Bumptuously of the Haggis" at a Burns Supper (n.d.; reproduced in Westwood 1993)

364).<sup>21</sup> A particularly hyperbolic rendition of this theme, presumably exaggerated for comic effect, occurs in an anonymous narrator's depiction of the "true history" of tasting his first haggis, published in the *Sporting Times* in January 1877, in which the haggis is portrayed as arch-nemesis and the act of consuming it as a kind of martyrdom. Early on in his account the narrator writes: "In the dim distance of the future HAGGIS loomed portentous. I was undergoing the initial throes of martyrdom. The anticipation of a doom is at times as appalling as the doom itself" (History of my first haggis 1877, 2). Later in the evening, he notes that "I again experienced the anticipatory pangs of my approaching doom." His depiction of the serving and tasting of the haggis, and its aftermath, is worth quoting at length:

My hour had come. It was the HAGGIS. .... I gazed at IT. I can only describe IT by comparisons. It looked like two cow's udders preternaturally distended. Within this skin, no doubt, the edible portion lay concealed. The WIZARD,<sup>22</sup> taking his knife, laid it lovingly upon IT's [sic] epidermis. One slight touch with the edge of the carver; then a report which, to my heated imagination, rivalled that of the 81-ton gun; then a volume of steam—dense, odorous, enveloping, and permeating. A sudden feeling of nausea seized me. I gulped down a bumper of Heidseick's champagne, and felt better.

The contents of the udder were placed on plates, being disembowelled with a spoon. My turn came. .... The contents of a stock-pot that has been preserved too long, dipped in lard, and flavoured with innumerable leeks, then boiled in an air-tight receptacle which keeps in all its juices and gases, will give you some small idea of what IT was. A long-indulgence in Scotch snuff, an immemorial habit of drinking Scotch whisky, might so prepare nose and palate that IT might be partaken of

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<sup>21</sup> He adds: "I can compare it to nothing but blue blazes, and gunpowder, fire and smoke" ([McDonogh] 1820, 364).

<sup>22</sup> All of the writers for the *Sporting Times* adopted pseudonyms, with accompanying personas who often featured as characters in their sketches. The "Wizard" was one of these.

without discomfort. But it was rough upon the gentle Southerner. .... I swallowed a portion. I remember calling for a liqueur of brandy. Then for some moments everything was a blank.

.... When I came to myself I found that I was sitting on a garden seat. My neck was stretched over a bed of parsley. The rain fell from the dank trees upon my hatless head. A tall footman stood beside me. No inducement could coax me to re-enter the dining-room. .... I pleaded sudden and severe indisposition, drove home, and sent for Sir William Gull.<sup>23</sup> I am now, thank Heaven! convalescent. And that is the true history of my first and my last Haggis. (History of my first haggis 1877, 2)

The conceptualisation of haggis and other stereotypically Scottish foods as “monsters” or aggressors that violently inflict themselves on the bodies of their English eaters was also used by Scottish writers as a means of exacting figurative revenge for the food slurs inflicted on the Scots by English satirists and other commentators. Probably the best example of this is a 1773 work by Scottish poet Robert Fergusson, which almost certainly influenced Burns’s “To a Haggis.” In “To the Principal and Professors of the University of St. Andrews....,” first published in the *Edinburgh Weekly Magazine* in September 1773, Fergusson envisions force-feeding a menu of aggressively Scottish dishes to the notorious English Scottophobe Samuel Johnson.<sup>24</sup> The poem expresses Fergusson’s outraged reaction to the generous hospitality extended to Johnson when he visited St. Andrews University during his journey through Scotland earlier that year. In particular, it satirises the decision to provide a menu for the occasion consisting largely of foreign delicacies such as “snails and puddocks [*frogs*]” from “France an’ Spain.” Fergusson’s poem is, in part, an explicit rejoinder to Johnson’s infamous definition of

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<sup>23</sup> Presumably a physician.

<sup>24</sup> The full text of Fergusson’s poem is given in Appendix C.

oats in his *Dictionary of the English language*, first published in 1755 (see Chapter 2). Fergusson responds by proposing an alternative “bill o’ fare” for Johnson’s visit to St. Andrews, consisting primarily of dishes containing oatmeal as a key ingredient, and beginning with “a haggis fat.” This is followed by “a gude sheep’s head” with “four black trotters”; some “gude fat brose” (an oatmeal dish with butter); and finally some “white and bloody puddings.” In her analysis of the poem, Janet Sorensen remarks on “the connection of an oral Scots language and culture to images of control of Johnson’s orifice,” as Fergusson “force[s] down Johnson’s throat particular Scots foods that would be repulsive to him” (2000a, 311). Similarly, Matthew Simpson observes that “throughout this punitive meal, ... the foods are not so much served ... as active in serving themselves” (2003, 110).<sup>25</sup>

James Kinsley, meanwhile, comments on the similarly “harsh, violent diction and images of slaughter” used to express the strength and virtue of the “haggis-fed rustic” in Burns’s “To a Haggis” itself (1968, 3:1221; cf. Appendix A). Whereas Fergusson force-feeds Johnson an entire menu of oatmeal-based foods, Burns focuses solely on haggis as his chosen symbol of Scottish culinary national identity. He extols the dish as the “Great Chieftan [*sic*] o’ the Puddin-race” and, like Fergusson, contrasts it with the weak and watery foreign delicacies that were then becoming increasingly popular among the upper echelons of British society, including “French *ragout*,” “*olio*” and “*fricassee*.” In an interesting reversal of the depictions of haggis in the English travelogues and subsequent

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<sup>25</sup> Thus whereas “the epicure chooses from the world’s food for his meals[,] in Fergusson’s poem, the food chooses the eater” (Simpson 2003, 110).



exoteric accounts, here it is the foreign delicacies that are likely to induce nausea, even in animals: the olio would "staw [*sate*] a sow," and the fricassee would "mak her spew/ Wi' perfect sconner [*disgust*]" (Burns 1787b, 262). Notably, too, Burns proceeds to deride the pathetically puny physiques of those who eat such fare:

Poor devil! see him owre his trash,	<i>over</i>
As feckless as a wither'd rash,	<i>rash</i>
His spindle shank a guid whip-lash,	<i>skinny leg, good</i>
His nieve a nit;	<i>fist, nut</i>
Thro' bluidy flood or field to dash,	<i>bloody</i>
O how unfit! (262-63)	

In stark contrast, Burns goes on to claim that, in battle, the "*haggis-fed*" Scot is possessed of the strength to "lop off his enemies' appendages as easily as he'd behead a thistle" (Zafar 1996, 142), while "[t]he trembling earth resounds his tread." Thus the association of Scottish foods with violence in the English travellers' accounts is here transformed into a means of exacting metaphorical revenge upon the creators of such negative culinary stereotypes themselves.

A particularly notable feature of the accounts discussed in this section is the way in which, by consuming haggis and other stereotypically Scottish dishes, the body of the eater is itself transformed into a dirty, diseased body, unable to control its own bodily functions; in short, it is rendered both foreign and grotesque. Although in some exoteric depictions of the dish, these comically deformed and othered bodies are those of the Scots themselves, in the majority of the accounts they are those of Englishmen who find themselves obliged to taste such foods. The English narrators' hyperbolic descriptions of haggis and, in particular, their own nauseated reactions are based on a dialectic between fascination and repulsion typical of responses to cultural otherness. They are based, too,

on a fear of contamination or contagion as a result of coming into contact with grotesque Scottish bodies through their food. As part of this process of contamination, their own "well-organized bowels" (Review.... 1826, 449) are rendered distinctly disorderly, a carnivalesque reversal that is simultaneously horrific and comedic. As Sorensen writes, "eighteenth-century aesthetic discourse presupposes a landed, white, male body capable of registering tasteful responses" (2000b, 112); these accounts turn this body, or at least its stomach, upside-down.

As Lupton writes: "the act of eating 'is both banal and fraught with potentially irreversible consequences,' for it is intimately related to concepts of self" (1996, 16, quoting Claude Fischler). Food is symbolically powerful because it is "a liminal substance" that routinely crosses "bodily boundaries." Lupton continues:

Fischler, therefore, writes not of eating or consumption but of "incorporation," or "the action in which we send a food across the frontier between the world and the self, between 'outside' and 'inside' our body." As the process of incorporation is inextricably linked to subjectivity it is the source of great anxiety and risk. By incorporating a food into one's body, that food is made to become self. ... As this suggests, subjectivity is not linked solely to the organic constituents of food, but also to its symbolic meaning. (1996, 17)

Thus, for example, in her analysis of depictions of food and eating in the journals of early French missionaries to New France, Catherine Briand writes that "the meal appears as a central and decisive scene in travel accounts, a crucial place for creating, reinforcing or contesting alliances" and for negotiating "the borders between self and other" (2008, 220, 226). As the examples discussed in this section illustrate, expressive cultural accounts of consuming haggis and other stereotypically Scottish foods similarly encode competing

perspectives on the cultural meanings of such foods, particularly as they relate to issues of identity and otherness.

Applying Fischler's concept of eating as incorporation to the accounts discussed here, a parallel can be drawn with Gerald O'Brien's work on the use of metaphors of poison and indigestible food in portrayals of immigrant groups by host societies (2003). Just as the Scottish foods depicted in these accounts wreak havoc with their English consumers' digestive systems, so such depictions symbolically figure the Scots themselves as "indigestible food" in the stomach of the English nation (cf. O'Brien 2003, 35-38).<sup>26</sup> Indeed, the metaphor of the Scots as an impurity or poison that England has ingested is reflected in the titles of several anti-Scottish satires of the 1760s, including *The British antidote to Caledonian poison* (a popular collection of anti-Scottish prints) [1763/64]; *An antidote by Carr for C-I-d-n [Caledonian] impurities* (ca. 1762) (BM Satires 3845) (cf. Figure 2.7, above); and *Scotch collops: An antidote for an English stomach* (1761) (BM Satires 3811). The title of this last print refers, at the literal level, to the indigestibility of Scottish food – *collops* was a Scottish term meaning slices of meat (*CSD*) – but also, metaphorically, to the Scots themselves as indigestible food. In a

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<sup>26</sup> Indeed, in contrast to the travel journals analysed by Briand, who writes that food is rarely rejected outright (2008), the narrators of some of the English travel accounts recount their outright refusal to partake of the Scottish dishes, sometimes without even tasting them. Peter Prig, for example, describes how, as soon as he lays eyes on the sheep's head, "my epicureanism got the better of my politeness and knowledge of the world" and he calls upon the waitress to remove it ([McDonogh] 1820, 364). Another traveller, Edward Topham, writes that "my politeness got the better of my delicacy, and I was prevailed on to taste" the haggis he was served at a dinner in an Edinburgh tavern in 1775, even managing to utter "a few encomiums on its being tender and savory" for the benefit of his hosts. After his first taste, however, he admits that "I could go no farther" (1971, 158).

similar way, the exoteric accounts discussed in this section implicitly reinforce the superiority of an English culture conceptualised as pure and wholesome, and express fears concerning the contaminating influence of its Scottish Other, figuring the process of cultural incorporation in terms of harmful physical ingestion (cf. Sussman 1994, 611).

As we have seen, however, Scots themselves also used (and continue to use) haggis and other stereotypically Scottish foods as a means of challenging English taste, of punishing the English body through force-feeding, or of reversing the stereotype so that it is the fancy foreign delicacies that are regarded as producing puny, emaciated physiques. Briand applies Jacques Derrida's concept of *hospitalité* to explore the violence inherent in the traveller's encounter with the food of the Other. She writes that "the concept of *hospitalité* attempts to convey a paradox: on the one hand, reaching out to strangeness and the harmonious living together of people with different identities (*hospitalité*) and on the other hand, presupposing a strong opposition to the stranger that can ... reach levels of extreme violence (*hostilité*)" (2008, 229). Moreover, she argues that, for the hosts, "food is a means of threatening the other [in this case the traveller him- or herself], an expression of power achieved by forcing the acceptance of one's codes and norms" (227). In the examples quoted above, this tension is expressed through the violence and aggression attributed to the Scottish foods themselves.

One final motif that remains to be discussed in this section is the way in which many of the accounts that focus on the dish's physiological effects on its consumers draw a parallel between the grotesqued body of the eater and the haggis itself; in other words, the food becomes conflated with the eater. Itai Vardi identifies a similar trope at work in

contemporary accounts of racialised eating contests in nineteenth- and early-twentieth-century America. As he writes, many such accounts used “a homology between food and body” as a means of othering and dehumanising the black contestants. Thus, for example: “newspaper accounts usually created a congruency between the size and roundness of watermelons and pies and the perceived dimensions of the black mouth, or alluded to a correlation between the competitor’s saliva and the moisture of the foodstuff” (2010, 384).<sup>27</sup> Perhaps the clearest example of this process I have come across in relation to haggis is an account by Christopher North (the *nom de plume* of Professor John Wilson), himself a Scot. North describes the experience of eating haggis thus:

A blind man cannot by any effort of the imagination conceive colour—nor can any man alive, no, not the greatest poet on earth, ... conceive a haggis without having had it submitted to the senses. It takes possession of the palate with a despotism that might be expected from the “great chieftain of the pudding race.” You forget for the time-being [*sic*] all other tastes. The real dishes before you seem fictions. You see them, but heed them not any more than ocular spectra. Your tongue feels enlarged in your mouth, not in size only, but in sensibility. It is more fibrous, also more porous. You could think it composed of the very haggis it enjoys. There is a harmonious call among tongue, palate, and insides of the cheeks.—That is the true total of the whole. Your very eyes have a gust; and your ears are somewhat dull of hearing, trying to taste. The stomach receives without effort, in Epicurean repose, and is satisfied in such gradual delight, that you scarcely know when, how, or why you have ceased to eat. You continue to eye the collapsed bag with grateful affection,—command the waiter to behave kindly to it when removed,—and follow it out of the room with a silent benediction. ([North] 1826, 656-57)

Note, here, not only the way in which the dish appears to take on a life of its own, despotically “tak[ing] possession of the palate,” but also how the body of the eater

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<sup>27</sup> Vardi argues that “the underlying racist logic in such homologies operates to produce a form of symbolic self-erasure: if the food is conflated with the body, the black contestant is ultimately consuming his own self” (2010, 386).

gradually merges with the haggis: "Your tongue feels enlarged in your mouth, not in size only, but in sensibility. It is more fibrous, also more porous. *You could think it composed of the very haggis it enjoys*" (emphasis added). The senses become disordered and confused, much like the contents of the haggis itself (cf. Chapter 1). A similar conflation of food and body can also be seen at work in the figurative use of the term *haggis* as "[a] term of contempt applied to a lumpish, unwieldy person; a soft, 'pudding-headed' person; a 'baggage'" (Wright 1898-1905, 3:16; cf. *OED*), implying uselessness, stupidity, clumsiness or laziness. *Haggis* can also be used in combination with various body-parts as a similarly figurative term of contempt; thus *haggis-headed* refers to a blockheaded, foolish or stupid person, while *haggis-hearted* denotes cowardice (Wright 1898-1905, 3:16).<sup>28</sup>

A further conflation of food and eater can be identified in several of the exoteric accounts of consuming haggis. We saw above how in many such accounts, the body of the English eater is transformed into a grotesque body; it is rendered uncontrollable and uncontainable, diseased bodily fluids gushing out of every orifice. Significantly, Lupton suggests that foods that are "too redolent of bodily fluids deemed polluting, such as saliva, semen, faeces, pus, phlegm and vomit," are often perceived to "threaten bodily integrity because of their ambiguity, their half-life between solids and fluids, the threat they pose of incorporating the self and dissolving boundaries" (1996, 114). As she writes, bodily fluids, and the foods that resemble them, "threaten to engulf, to defile; they

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<sup>28</sup> In a similar way, Davies remarks on the frequent use of "shapeless foods of mixed ingredients" as "metaphor[s] for stupidity, muddle, disorder and worthlessness" (1990, 302).

are difficult to be rid of, they seep and infiltrate. They challenge our desire to be self-contained and self-controlled" (1996, 114). Although Lupton refers specifically to foods that are sticky or slimy in texture, the "enigmatic appearance" and "uncertain contents" of haggis undoubtedly also fall into this category (cf. Davies 1990, 299-300).<sup>29</sup> Moreover, the haggises depicted in many of the exoteric accounts are portrayed as literally uncontrollable and uncontainable, threatening to engulf and defile, just like the bodily fluids of their unfortunate eaters.

This motif can be seen particularly clearly in exoteric accounts of exploding haggises. A notable feature of some of the English travellers' accounts, for example, is the metaphorical association of the haggises encountered by their narrators with forces of nature such as floods and volcanoes. Edward Topham, for example, writing in 1775, combines these two distinct but related natural metaphors in the process of describing the serving of a haggis that he sampled at a dinner in an Edinburgh tavern. He begins by describing how "an incision being made in the side of it, the entrails burst forth, '*ceu rapidus montano flumine torrens* [like the rushing torrent from a mountain stream]'" (Topham 1971, 157). This phrase is adapted from a figurative passage in Book 2 of Virgil's *Aeneid*, in which the aforementioned raging torrent "devastat[es] the fields, destroys the ripe crops – wasting the oxen's efforts –/ and uproots the trees" (Wilson

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<sup>29</sup> Similarly, Davies writes that foods resembling vomit or half-digested food, including porridge and, I would add, haggis, often form the subjects of food-related ethnic humour (1990, 302).

2003).<sup>30</sup> In the same sentence, Topham switches metaphors, going on to describe how the haggis “presented such a display of oatmeal, and sheep’s liver, and lights, with a mofeta that accompanied them, that I could scarcely help thinking myself in the *Grotto del Cane*” (1971, 157-58). A *mofeta*, or *mofette*, is an exhalation of hot vapour from a fumarole, a vent in or near a volcano (*OED*), in this case the Grotta del Cane (Dog Cave) near Naples, a popular tourist destination at the time when Topham was writing (cf. Halliday and Cigna 2006).<sup>31</sup>

Both the raging torrent and the volcanic metaphor are similarly evoked in Peter Prig’s description of how, upon stabbing his haggis with his knife, “out gushed such a flood of abomination, that I was almost suffocated” ([McDonogh] 1820, 364). Both the flood and the volcano are characterised by their volatility, uncontrollability, and often devastating destructiveness; the comparison of the cutting open of the haggis with these natural phenomena thus constitutes a further instance of hyperbole.<sup>32</sup> A similar depiction of an uncontainable haggis can be seen in Isaac Cruikshank’s satirical print *St. Andrew’s Day* (1800) (see Figure 3.3). At the figurative level, I suggest that such accounts can be read as expressions of English fears concerning Scottish culture’s active resistance to

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<sup>30</sup> The original Latin text reads as follows: “...aut rapidus montano flumine torrens/ sternit agros, sternit sata laeta boumque labores/ praecipitesque trahit silvas...” (2:305-7).

<sup>31</sup> The Grotta del Cane is located in the Phlegrean Fields volcanic area near Naples. The cave’s name derives from the existence of “a carbon dioxide layer, which is toxic for animals but not for a man standing erect” (Halliday and Cigna 2006, 131), and which has made it a popular tourist destination since at least the sixteenth century.

<sup>32</sup> Such imagery also has obvious sexual connotations, which accords with the common tendency, already discussed above, to sexualise the ethnic Other.





Figure 3.3. Isaac Cruikshank's satirical print *St. Andrew's Day* (1800), featuring an uncontainable haggis inflicting itself on one of its eaters (The Huntington Library, Art Collections, and Botanical Gardens)

incorporation by its dominant southern neighbour. They also prefigure later, humorous accounts of exploding haggises in nineteenth-century British popular culture, including an illustration by John Leech published in the London magazine *Punch, or the London Charivari* in 1859, featuring Queen Victoria's Scottish servant John Brown "entertaining" her with a haggis (see Figure 3.4).<sup>33</sup>

Significantly, however, humorous accounts involving uncontainable haggises were also composed by Scots. A much-quoted example was published in *Blackwood's Edinburgh Magazine* in an 1828 episode of the "Noctes Ambrosianae," a serial recounting the adventures of a fictional Edinburgh dining club. In this episode, which was christened "The haggis deluge" by a later editor, the members of the club are about to tuck into their latest feast when one of them incautiously plunges his knife into the haggis, whereupon "the Table is instantly overflowed" ([North] 1828, 688; cf. North 1876). The episode quickly descends into farce, as the company is forced to clamber atop various items of furniture and to perch on each others' shoulders in order to escape death by drowning in the rising tide of haggis. One of the characters, the Shepherd (a fictionalised persona for Scottish author James Hogg), calls out to Christopher North: "Oh, haud [*hold*] fast, sir, wi' your arms roun' my neck, lest the cruel tyrant o' a haggis swoop ye clean awa under the sideboard to inevitable death!" ([North] 1828, 689). From his vantage point astride the Shepherd's shoulders, North (the persona of Professor John

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<sup>33</sup> Victoria's enthusiasm for all things Scottish, as well as rumours concerning her alleged "emotional dependency" on Brown, were the subject of a great deal of satirical comment during this period (McGuirk 1994, 53). Much of this satirical material drew on culinary and other stereotypes of Scottishness.



Figure 3.4. An illustration published in the English magazine *Punch, or the London Charivari*, featuring Queen Victoria's Scottish servant John Brown "entertaining" her with an exploding haggis ([Leech] 1859; cf. Leech 1886-87, 2:10)

Wilson, who composed the "Noctes") replies: "Far as the eye can reach it is one wide wilderness of suet!" (689). Eventually the haggis begins to subside, and the company is saved.

Another example appears in an anecdote that can be traced back to at least 1814. It involves a Scottish nobleman, the Laird of Stoneywood, who had fought in the Jacobite army that unsuccessfully attempted to restore the Stuart dynasty to the British throne in 1745. The incident in question is said to have occurred while Stoneywood was living in hiding in the mountains of northeast Scotland following the Jacobites' devastating defeat at the battle of Culloden in April 1746. He and his friends are boiling a haggis for their dinner one evening when they notice a party of English soldiers climbing the hill towards them. As they turn to flee, one of Stoneywood's servants knocks over the pot containing the haggis, to prevent their enemies from enjoying their dinner. The haggis rolls downhill towards the English soldiers, one of whom, not knowing what it is, catches it on his bayonet, "thereby showering its contents over himself and his comrades." Seeing this, Stoneywood's servant exclaims: "See there! even the haggis, God bless her, can charge down hill" ([Brown] 1866, 45). A variant of this phrase was used by Sir Walter Scott in his novel *Waverley*, first published in 1814 (Scott 1972, 332). In the narrative "The restless haggis," meanwhile, the dish does not actually explode but is surreptitiously spiked with "four ounce of quicksilver [i.e., mercury]"; as a result, it refuses to stay in the pot but ends up "dancin' on the floor," convincing the unfortunate cook that "the diel's [sic] [*Devil's*] got into the Haggis" ([Webster] 1829, 78; cf. Cunningham 1889, 205; Briggs 1991, 1:248-49).

If exoteric depictions of uncontainable haggises can be interpreted as culinary metaphors for English fears concerning Scottish culture's active resistance to incorporation by its dominant southern neighbour, then, by the same token, esoteric depictions of such haggises can be read as active expressions of such resistance. Such symbolism seems unmistakable in the Stoneywood account, in which the haggis is inadvertently enlisted as a weapon in the Scottish fugitives' ongoing struggle to avoid capture by the English soldiers. Similarly, although the members of the dining club in the "Noctes Ambrosianae" are themselves Scottish, an uncontrollable sea of haggis seems an apt metaphor for the exuberant cultural nationalism for which the "Noctes" is renowned. Moreover, if the exploding haggises in the exoteric accounts mimic the grotesque bodies of their English consumers, then, in the esoteric depictions, such haggises can be read as standing in for the grotesque Scottish body as constructed by the English gaze. Such accounts can thus be interpreted as celebrations of that body's grotesque excess. As McCracken-Flesher writes, "the Scotland bodied forth through the *Malachi Malagrowther* letters brims with unnatural and uncontainable passions" (1995/96, 81). In a similar way, Scottish accounts of exploding haggises "represent Scotland as a plenitude of bodily difference," thereby "render[ing] it unnarratable, impossible to contain within narrowly colonial plots," as suggested above (1995/96, 77). The final section of this chapter provides further evidence in support of the symbolic conflation of the grotesque Scottish body with haggis, exploring how many of the expressive cultural materials surrounding the dish portray the haggis *as* body.

### **"Your hurdies like a distant hill": Haggises as Grotesque Bodies**

The argument presented in the previous section, that in many of the expressive cultural depictions of haggis the dish can be read as standing in for the grotesque Scottish body, is reinforced by the large number of expressive texts in which the dish itself is portrayed *as* a grotesque body. This section explores the range of grotesque body metaphors used in expressive cultural depictions of the dish, including the haggis as foreign body, as diseased or contaminated body, and as cadaver. Perhaps the earliest manifestation of this theme occurs in the context of early English travellers' accounts of their experiences in Scotland in the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries, including both autobiographical and fictional accounts.<sup>34</sup> As discussed in the previous section, the narrators of these accounts often profess themselves literally unable to stomach the Scottish foods encountered on their travels, exhibiting a preoccupation with these dishes' effects on their bodies. A further notable theme of several of the fictional travelogues, in particular, is their comparison of the appearance of the Scottish dishes – especially haggis and singed sheep's head – to the body-parts of various more overtly exoticised ethnic Others. Jery Melford's account of the Edinburgh dinner in Smollett's *Expedition of Humphry Clinker*, for example, not only describes the effect of the haggis

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<sup>34</sup> As Alastair Durie writes, travellers' accounts, both published and unpublished, represent the main source of evidence for researching the development of tourism in Scotland before the turn of the nineteenth century (2003, 21). On the history and development of Scottish tourism more generally, see, for example, Butler 1985; Butler 1998; Durie 1996; Durie 2003; Glendening 1997; Gold and Gold 1995; Grenier 2005; Grenier 2006; MacArthur 1993; Seaton 1998; Smout 1983.

on his own stomach, but also includes the following description of the singed sheep's head that was served on the same occasion: "the [singed sheep's head] put me in mind of the history of Congo, in which I had read of negroes' heads sold publicly [*sic*] in the markets" (Smollett 1985, 259). Similarly, Peter Prig, the narrator of another of the fictional travelogues discussed in the previous section, describes the singed sheep's head with turnips that he was served on his first night over the Scottish Border thus: "it looked like a black-a-moors [*sic*] head garnished with snow balls" ([McDonogh] 1820, 364). In Samuel Ryley's fictional account *The itinerant in Scotland* (1827), meanwhile, the narrator recalls that on being served haggis for the first time, "I thought it resembled the posteriors of a mulatto" (Ryley 1827, 8:251). In a related vein, one of the English reviewers of Meg Dods's *Cook and housewife's manual* (1826) quoted in the previous section writes of haggis that "one would as soon talk of chopping up ... an Egyptian mummy for the table" (Review.... 1826, 450).

In all of these examples, as Charlotte Sussman argues in her analysis of *Humphry Clinker*, "the alien nature of Scottish culture is amplified by its figuration as Africa," with the result that "eating the haggis [or the sheep's head] becomes cannibalism, literally taking the colonized other inside oneself" (1994, 611).<sup>35</sup> In her work on the role of the

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<sup>35</sup> The figuration of Scotland as Africa implicit in comparisons of haggis and singed sheep's head with the body-parts of various ethnic Others also finds an echo in other expressive cultural associations of haggis with the concept of blackness. One of the reviewers of Dods's *Manual*, for example, draws a comparison between the dish and another notoriously unpalatable ethnic food, the so-called "black broth" of ancient Sparta (Review.... 1827, 48; Review.... 1826, 449, re: singed sheep's head; cf. Alcock 2006, 196). Several other accounts refer to "secret, black and midnight haggis" – a pun on the "secret, black and midnight hags" in Shakespeare's *Macbeth* (see further the discussion below). Briand argues that the emphasis on the darkness or blackness of native food and

meal in early travellers' accounts, Catherine Briand suggests that "incorporation can be experienced as threatening, accompanied by the fear of altering one's identity, purity and honor" (2008, 224; cf. Hepburn 2008). Thus, for instance, English commentators on haggis sometimes figure its ingestion as constituting a physical violation of the body and react with repugnance. The reviewer of Dods's *Manual*, for example, refers to haggis as an "infernal mess" and an "abominable compost," and to Scottish foods in general as "prodigious horrors," "atrocities of appetite and violations of the internal man," which are "perpetrated" on their unfortunate consumers (Review.... 1826, 449-50). In a similar way, as Sussman argues of *Humphry Clinker*, the accounts quoted here can be seen to "[figure] the transculturation of English culture as a kind of poisonous physical incorporation of cultural difference," the characters' "horror [of] contaminated foods" reflecting "the destructive presence of [the] other inside" (1994, 611).<sup>36</sup>

The underlying concept of eating haggis as a poisonous physical incorporation of cultural difference is also reflected in a related motif within the corpus of expressive culture materials surrounding the dish, that is, the portrayal of haggis as a diseased body.

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drink in the travellers' accounts she studied symbolically associates them with "the darkness of sin" (2008, 226). However, the examples discussed here clearly emphasise the ethnic othering dimension of the dish's association with blackness.

<sup>36</sup> Conversely, the figuration of the *Scots* as cannibals – the ultimate alimentary Other – in contemporary English expressive culture can be seen to reflect a fear of being consumed by the Other. The author of the *Description of Scotland, and its inhabitants* (1705), for example, alleges that "you might, with as much safety, enter into a League of Friendship with a *Cannibal*, (who wou'd upon the first opportunity eat you up) as with a *Scotchman*" (B. 1705, 2). The reviewer of Dods's *Manual* for the *London Literary Gazette* comments that "of all cookery in the universe, (excepting cannibalism in Sumatra, and rotten blubber of the Eskimaux,) we pray to be defended from singed sheep's heads, fat brose, and haggises" (Review.... 1826, 450).



The reviewer of Dods's *Manual* for the London *Monthly Review*, for example, doubts whether "any gentleman, professing to be ... a man of refinement, could, without fainting, endure the steam of fat distilled perfumes which must issue from such a compound as the said haggis, on its paracentesis" (Review.... 1827, 48). Paracentesis is a surgical term for the operation of making a perforation into a cavity of the body to remove fluid or gas (*OED*). The use of medical terminology thus exaggerates the disgusting nature of the dish by figuring the haggis as a diseased body.

Both the haggis as foreign body and the haggis as diseased body are encoded in two recent cartoons in British newspapers depicting Scottish-born politician Gordon Brown as a haggis. The first example (actually the later of the two), by cartoonist Morten Morland, appeared in the London *Times* in January 2010, when Brown was the British Prime Minister, and during a period when his popularity was at an all-time low (see Figure 3.5). In the cartoon, Brown's head is being served up as a haggis, with his hair as the entrails gushing out of a slit in the top; he is ashen, flaccid and lifeless, his sunken eyes reduced to slits. The accompanying text is a parody of Burns's "Selkirk grace" ("meat" here stands for food in general), with the last line of the original – "And sae the Lord be thankit" – replaced by the opposite sentiment: "Though most would rather leave it." As evidenced by the case of Lord Bute in the 1760s (see Chapter 2), whenever a Scot is perceived to enjoy excessive influence within the British state, and particularly when his popularity is at a low ebb, it follows that his nationality will be used as a means of

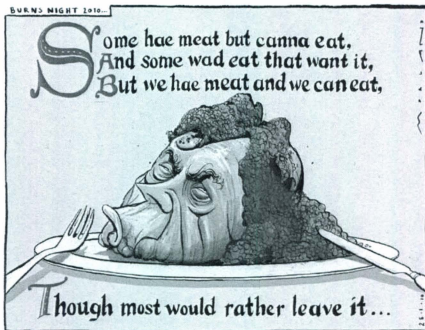


Figure 3.5. Cartoon by Morten Morland published in the *London Times* (January 2010), depicting British Prime Minister Gordon Brown as a distinctly unappetising haggis  
(© Morten Morland / *The Times* 2010)

satirising him within English cultural discourse.<sup>37</sup> This certainly seems to be the case in this example, in which Brown's figuration as a distinctly unappetising haggis serves to dehumanise him, thereby emphasising his otherness.

The second example, by cartoonist Dave Brown, was published in the *Independent* in July 2005, when Gordon Brown was the British Chancellor of the Exchequer under Prime Minister Tony Blair (see Figure 3.6). Blair is depicted as a deranged chef serving up Brown, in the form of a haggis, to a nauseated American President George Bush and French President Jacques Chirac. The cartoon responds to comments made by Chirac in the run-up to the G8 summit that took place in Gleneagles, Scotland, in summer 2005. Chirac was overheard by a reporter making a series of anti-British food slurs to German Chancellor Gerhard Schröder and Russian President Vladimir Putin. These included the allegations that Britain had the worst cuisine in the European Union "after Finland"; that a country with such "awful cooking" was not to be trusted; and that Britain's only contribution to agriculture was BSE ("Mad Cow Disease"). Chirac also attributed the internal tensions within NATO to his having been made to taste "unappetising" haggis by the former NATO Secretary-General, Scottish-born Lord George Robertson. In the cartoon, the outrageousness – and therefore otherness – of Scottish food is clearly reflected by the portrayal of Brown as haggis. At the same time, however, the cartoon appears to represent that very outrageousness as a

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<sup>37</sup> Unlike his predecessor Tony Blair, who was also born and partly educated in Scotland, Brown made no secret of his Scottishness during his political career. He has a recognisably Scottish accent; he represented a Scottish constituency; and he repeatedly credited his upbringing as the son of a Presbyterian, Church of Scotland minister for the "moral compass" that guided his conduct while in office.

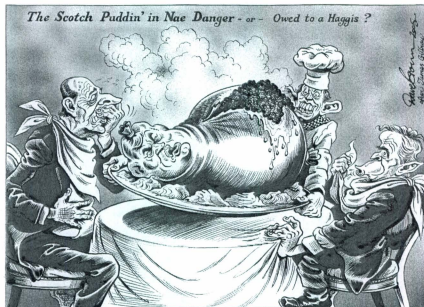


Figure 3.6. Cartoon by Dave Brown published in the *Independent* (July 2005), depicting Prime Minister Tony Blair as a deranged chef serving up Brown, in the form of a haggis, to a nauseated American President George Bush and French President Jacques Chirac  
(© Dave Brown / *The Independent* 2005)

means of exacting revenge on Chirac for his anti-British food slurs, forcing Brown-as-haggis down his throat much like Fergusson envisaged doing to Samuel Johnson.

An extension of the grotesque body theme is found in the form of spoof recipes for the dish in which the actual ingredients have been replaced by the body-parts of a variety of creatures not generally perceived as edible, including pets, insects, reptiles, and even humans. These ingredients are often combined with a range of other incongruous items, with the intent of portraying the dish's contents as outrageously as possible. Such spoof recipes appear to have been particularly popular in English magazines during the nineteenth century. Several sources from the 1870s onwards, for example, contain varyingly elaborate versions of the following recipe, which in its most basic articulation is clearly joke-like in form: "A Haggis—Cat's meat boiled in dog's meat, and served in a bagpipe!" (Adam 1904, 19; cf. Macdougall 1873, 246; Irvine 1938, 112; A pressure on our space.... 1879, 8).<sup>38</sup> A particularly intricate example from an 1892 edition of the *Sporting Times* gives the following instructions for preparing the dish, while maintaining a dead cat as the basic ingredient:

First catch your cat, and, after running him through the mangle, dry and rub in a mixture (previously prepared) of one ounce of cinnamon, three drops of oil of sodium, an onion stuck with three cloves, the rind of half a lemon, a cake of Pears' soap (unscented), a pinch of cayenne, a teaspoonful of mustard, a tablespoonful of kid Reviver [i.e., boot-polish], the rust off a garden roller, and a Scotch philibeg [i.e. kilt], adding thereto the liquor in which a fine lusty salmon has been boiled. Wrap the whole in the skin of a bagpipe, and boil well. Just before serving, open the skin,

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<sup>38</sup> "A 'leeberal [*liberal*] Englishman'—and a guid freen [*good friend*] o' mine—says haggis is simply dog's-meat stuffed wi' cat's-meat" (Macdougall 1873, 246). "[Haggis is] the stomach of a dog, mixed with the stomach of a cat, boiled in a bagpipe" (Irvine 1938, 112).

and add a little Keating's Insect Destroyer. Probable cost—a happy home. ("New Broom" 1892, 5)

A similar spoof recipe is implied in comparisons of the dish's ingredients with the contents of the witches' cauldron in Shakespeare's *Macbeth*. The author of the review of Meg Dods's *Manual* in the *London Literary Gazette*, for example, writes that "the idea of [haggis] seems to have been taken from the witches' cauldron in *Macbeth*" (Review.... 1826, 449). A fictional travelogue published in *Punch* magazine in 1888 refers to the dish as "[t]he Midnight haggis' mentioned by *Macbeth*" (a pun on the "midnight hags" of Shakespeare's original) (Due north 1888, 148), while a mock examination paper on *Macbeth* featured in the same publication ten years later asks students to "[d]escribe...the contents of the Witches' cauldron, and explain the difference (if any) between Hell-broth and Haggis" (Cantab. 1898, 215; cf. "Priam" 1863, 325; Some queer advertisements 1869, 185). The contents of the witches' cauldron include the body-parts of such creatures as toads, snakes, frogs, bats, dragons, tigers, wolves, dogs, lizards and baboons, among others. Moreover, the cauldron also contains various human body-parts, further reinforcing the association of the dish with cannibalism. These ingredients include a "witch's mummy" (the ashes of a dead witch); "Liver of blaspheming Jew," "Nose of Turk, and Tartar's lips"; and finally a "[f]inger of birth-strangled babe." The spoof recipe for haggis in the poem "Horace," by the popular British comedy troupe Monty Python, goes still further, basing itself around the carnivalesque image of auto-cannibalism: the stomach that is both all-consuming and is itself consumed. The poem begins by describing how: "Much to his Mum and Dad's dismay/ Horace ate himself one day./ He didn't stop to say his grace./ He just sat down and ate his face." As the poem continues,

Horace gradually eats every part of his anatomy, until eventually: "There he lay: a boy no more,/ Just a stomach, on the floor.../ None the less, since it was his/ They ate it – that's what haggis is" (Monty Python [1971], [27]).

The proliferation of such spoof recipes for haggis within English popular culture almost certainly results from the indistinguishability and therefore suspect nature of its ingredients (cf. Cohane 1985, 27), which makes it an object of suspicion and speculation for the cultural outsider. In a similar way, Davies discusses how the sausage's "enigmatic appearance" and "uncertain contents" have resulted in countless jokes about sausages that have been "adulterated with tabooed meat or with things that are not meat at all" (1990, 298-300). Like the sausages discussed by Davies, the haggis, too, is "a formless, ambiguous, identityless, and therefore comic form of meat" (1990, 297-98). The prominence of tabooed meats – both animal and human – as ingredients in the spoof recipes for the dish also recalls the cycle of contemporary legends dealing with the serving of such meats at Chinese and other ethnic restaurants, or with immigrant groups whose members are alleged to kill the pets of local residents for food (cf. Chapter 2). However, the humorous tone of the spoof recipes and other sources quoted in this section reflects a gradual change in attitude that took place within English cultural representations of Scottishness during the nineteenth century. As Paul Langford astutely observes, English caricatures of the Scots from the early 1800s onwards "did not have about [them] the venomous contempt that went with much anti-Scottish sentiment in the age of Bute. [They] took the form of what passed for innocent humour. Here was a new game for the self-consciously tolerant but gently mocking English gentleman" (2005,

168). Thus the spoof recipes are clearly intended as jokes rather than as legends or rumours. The use of bagpipes as the vessel in which the dish is cooked in many of these recipes further contributes to the humour by combining the motif of the haggis's outrageous ingredients with another prominent comic stereotype of Scottishness, which conveniently happens to be similar to haggis in shape.<sup>39</sup>

Interestingly, however, the Scots themselves appear to have been creating spoof recipes for haggis well before the English were, as evidenced by the folksong "The haggis o' Dunbar," which was collected from Scottish oral tradition at least as early as 1818.<sup>40</sup> The following version is transcribed from the manuscript collection of Scottish folksong collector William Motherwell, compiled circa 1820:

There was a haggis in Dunbar	
Mony better but few waur	<i>many, worse</i>
A' to mak the haggis fou	<i>full</i>
Our wife put in a stane [or puck/peck] o' woo'.	<i>stone-weight, wool</i>

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<sup>39</sup> There are numerous examples in which haggis is simply described as looking like a "boiled bagpipe." These include the following: "I now came to the haggis. Gemini! what a horror! It looked like a boiled bagpipe" ([McDonogh] 1820, 364). "'Twas dinner hour, and the good people of the house, were seated round something smoking that resembled boiled bagpipes, which on inquiry I found to be a famous Scotch dish, called haggis" (Ryley 1827, 8:89). "There was a Scotch dish served up this day called a *Haggis* ... our young friend swore it was boil'd Bagpipes" (Ryley 1827, 8:251). "Alas! it was full of onions, and bore the romantic name of Haggis, a sort of coarse mince-meat, looking, in its singular envelope, like *boiled bagpipes*!" (Sheridan 1835, 92). "Boil'd bagpipes and haggis, sheep's head, cocky leeky" (Sinclair 1842, 88). Another account comments that the appearance of the haggis resembles "the wind-bag of an old bagpipes gone mouldy" ("New Broom" 1892, 5).

<sup>40</sup> There is an allusion to a tune of this title in William Vickers's *Great Northern tune book* of 1770 (see Seattle 2008). For other Scottish versions of the song, see Shuldham-Shaw, Lyle, and Campbell 2002, 322; Shoolbraid 2010, 74.



A' to mak the haggis fat Our wife put in the carle [or scabbit] cat.	<i>tomcat [or scabbed cat]</i>
A' to mak the haggis fen' Our wife put in the clockin' hen.	<i>[fine?] clucking</i>
A' to mak the haggis rare Our wife put in a stane o' hair.	
Yellow puddocks hackit sma' Yird taeds' guts and a'.	<i>frogs, chopped small common toads'</i>
Bits o' straps and bits o' straes And a' the bairns' dirty claes.	<i>[straps of leather?], straws children's, clothes</i>
A' to mak the haggis queer Our wife put in a dead meer.	<i>mare</i>
A boll o' meal baith auld and mity Wi' rotten eggs [or sow's dirt] and acqua vitie.	<i>old, infested with mites</i>
A' to mak the haggis nice Our wife put in a peck o' lice.	
A' to mak the haggis brown She left nae dirt round a' the town.	<i>no</i>
When it was made and weel eneuch She ca'd the Gudeman frae the pleuch.	<i>well enough Goodman, plough</i>
"Fye," quo' the Gudeman, "gie's a spoon And let us sup till it be done."	<i>give me</i>
The first spoonfu he gat was fu o' hair. (Here the singer bocks, hawks and spits) "God save 's," quo' he, "I'll sup nae mair."	<i>no more</i>
(Motherwell [ca. 1820], 49-51)	

Again, bodies and body-parts, most of them diseased, dead or downright disgusting, feature prominently among the ingredients of the haggis depicted in this song. They include a "scabbit [*scabby*] cat" and a "dead meer [*mare*]"; frogs and toads; a "peck o'

lice"; and a stone-weight of (presumably) human hair. An alternative version noted by Motherwell includes "sow's dirt" (presumably excrement) in place of the "rotten eggs." The hen, meanwhile, appears to go into the dish still "clockin'," and thus presumably feathers and all. Another Scottish spoof recipe appears in *Sandy McTartan's Hogmanay haggis* (1874), and compares the haggis to "the rib of a megatherium," a prehistoric species of giant sloth:

A Scotch Haggis ... is a national institution compounded in equal parts of moorland heather, dried peat, thistle-down, and trap-rock [a type of igneous rock], boiled thick and tough in burn water [i.e., river-water], and squeezed, finally, through a skin. When done and served, it resembles the rib of a megatherium, or better still, ... a policeman's baton with a strong inclination to curl, standing boldly out, beyond all rivalry or possible displacement, as the terror of the gastric juices, and the perpetual nightmare of indigestion. (Murdoch 1874, 11)

The existence of these Scottish examples complicates the interpretation of spoof recipes for haggis as a form of culinary ethnic joke at the Scots' expense. Instead, particularly in this last example, there is a sense that the dish's allegedly outrageous ingredients, intimidating appearance and horrific effect on the digestive system are being purposely exaggerated as a source of (somewhat perverse) national pride. The Scottish spoof recipes exemplify the way in which, as Robert Crawford writes, in many cultural expressions of Scottish culinary identity "a sense that the bill of fare may appear joyfully outrageous ... is relished as part of its appeal" (1997, 7). Such accounts take the underlying ethnocentricity of the English spoof recipes and reverse it, transforming Scottish cultural difference into a positive statement of identity. Only the Scots, the suggestion seems to be, are brave enough to eat such outrageous food.

A similar argument can be made about the tall tale tradition that depicts the haggis as a legendary creature native to the Scottish Highlands. Again, this tradition appears to have emerged south of the Border as a form of ethnic joke at the Scots' expense. The earliest account I have located depicting haggis as a legendary creature appears in a letter written by the English novelist William Makepeace Thackeray to the Scottish poet William Edmondstone Aytoun in the summer of 1848. At the top of the letter, Thackeray pens the following comic verse, a playful spoof of the romantic prose-poetry that was a popular device in the historical fiction of the day (cf. Weinstein 1977):

"When the bee is in the bonnet and the heather on the brae  
And the lilting Bubblyjocky [*turkey*] carols forth on ilka spray  
When *the Haggis in the muirland* and the Estrich [*Ostrich*] on the tree  
Sing their matins at the sunset dost thou think my Jean of me?[""]  
(Thackeray [1848], [1], emphasis added)

No other versions of the tall tale have yet come to light until the 1890s, when allusions to the haggis creature – "wild haggis," "pet haggis," and so on – begin to appear in the English popular press with increasingly regularity.<sup>41</sup> As illustrated by the earliest known visual depiction of the legendary haggis creature, a cartoon by Sidney Strube published in the London *Daily Express* in February 1914, the creature is a truly grotesque body (see Figure 3.7): a culinary haggis to which have been added miscellaneous body-parts of

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<sup>41</sup> Thackeray's verse was eventually published in the *Daily Telegraph* newspaper in July 1894 and again in the following month's edition of the periodical *Notes and Queries* (In the sale of autographs.... 1894, 7; Skeat 1894, 85; cf. Skeat 1896, 363). It is perhaps no coincidence that references to the haggis as legendary creature begin to appear with increasingly regularity around this time.



**THE DEVASTATING HAGGIS.**

L. G. IN SCOTLAND: "How much longer are you Scotsmen going to put up with the depredations of this voracious Haggis, the destroyer of your thistle crops?"

Figure 3.7. Cartoon by Sidney Strube published in the London *Daily Express* (February 1914): this is perhaps the earliest visual depiction of the haggis as legendary creature (British Cartoon Archive)

various birds and animals. The creature is clad in a kilt.<sup>42</sup> More recent depictions of the haggis creature support the interpretation that it can be read as a grotesque rendering of the Scottish body itself (e.g., see Figures 3.8 and 3.9). The creature is usually depicted clad in a tartan bonnet and/or a kilt and sporran, and sometimes playing the bagpipes. Although such a reading might suggest that the legendary haggis creature simply functions as one more means of dehumanising the Scots, the tall tale is most frequently told by Scots themselves to tourists and other cultural outsiders, as a means of testing their gullibility. As I have suggested elsewhere (cf. Fraser 2003), in this context the tall tale tradition functions as a means of making creative play with contested images of Scottishness, either subverting them through parody or transforming them into positive expressions of identity. In this sense, the legendary haggis creature can be read as a celebratory “bodying forth” of the grotesque excess of the Scottish body, to borrow McCracken-Flesher’s phrase.

In closing, I wish to suggest that Burns’s “To a Haggis” (1786), the most famous and influential of all expressive cultural texts about the dish, can also be read as a depiction of the haggis as grotesque body. Although the poem begins with a greeting

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<sup>42</sup> The cartoon is entitled “The devastating haggis” and depicts David Lloyd George (then Chancellor of the Exchequer), dressed in a kilt, addressing a group of Scotsmen and saying: “How long are you Scotsmen going to put up with the depredations of this voracious haggis, destroyer of your thistle crops.” The underlying incident referred to here is a speech that Lloyd George had made the previous year at the start of his Land Reform Campaign, in which he had claimed that “the pheasants of the rich landowners were eating the crops of mangold wurzels of the poor farmers” (British Cartoon Archive). This unfortunately nonsensical remark was the subject of a great deal of public ridicule in the months that followed.

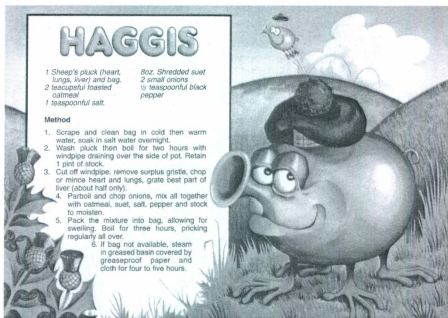


Figure 3.8. Postcard depicting legendary haggis creatures together with a recipe for the culinary haggis (n.d.) (Whiteholme of Dundee)

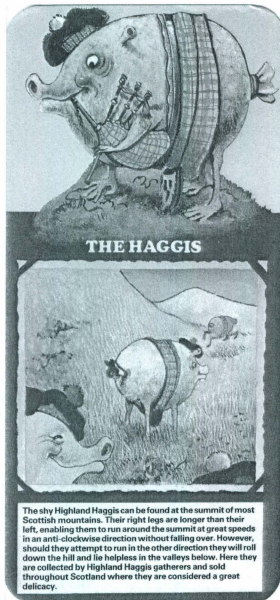


Figure 3.9. Postcard depicting legendary haggis creatures together with a textual version of the tall tale (n.d.) (Colourmaster International)





Burns's haggis when she refers to its "swelling and glistening properties"; she notes, moreover, that these properties are subsequently transferred to the eaters of the dish (1993, 242-43). Thus their "well-swallow'd kytes [*swollen bellies*]" become "bent like drums," until that of the "auld Guidman," or patriarch, just like the haggis itself, is "maist like to rive [*ready to burst*]." Crawford, meanwhile, notes a similar correspondence between the "absurd strength" of the haggis with its giant hurdies and pin and that of the "haggis-fed Rustic" whose tread the earth resounds as he charges to victory in battle (2009, 247). As in the examples discussed in the previous section, then, Burns's haggis is conflated with the bodies of its eaters, becoming the very stuff of their selves, and thereby coming to represent the Scottish body itself in all its grotesque excess.

Moreover, several commentators have noted the parallel between the ceremony that developed around the haggis in the context of the Burns Supper, and that of the Holy Communion service. As part of this ceremony, which is discussed at length in the next chapter, the haggis is ceremonially carried into the hall by a cook in full cook's regalia, preceded by a kilted piper; it is then "addressed" with the words of Burns's poem. During this recitation, at the point in the poem when "Rustic-Labour" cuts into the haggis, the ceremonial haggis is cut open by the orator, who marks it in the shape of a St. Andrew's cross. The dish is then toasted with whisky. Thus Mary Ellen Cohane, for example, argues that the ceremony is both an ostensive re-enactment of the occasion depicted in Burns's poem, and a parodic Communion service. As she writes, the haggis ceremony "is a parody of the sacred service, even as it takes symbolic resonance from it":

As in a communion service, transforming words are said over the haggis; the haggis is marked with a cross as it is cut; and the haggis is

ceremonially eaten together with alcohol, although here, the beverage is not consecrated wine, but Scotch whiskey [*sic*]. The observers are invited to eat ritual food that unites them with one another, but one must not, it must be remembered, take haggis too seriously. (1985, 27)

In this context, then, we find yet another body metaphor: that of the haggis as symbolic cadaver. Sydney Goodsir Smith, in a 1955 critique of what he and others refer to derogatorily as the "Burns Cult," makes the connection explicit. He describes the participants in the Burns Supper as "a sort of necrophagists, corpse-eaters devouring the symbolic cadaver (the haggis) at their ritual banquets before hearkening to the prescribed canticles and prayers" (Smith 1955, 20). More recently, in a similar denunciation of the Burns Cult, Scottish composer James MacMillan writes that:

The ... Burns Supper is unmistakably a Parody Mass with its liturgies of The Word and The Eucharist. Homilies and invocations are used to evoke "sacred" memory, "epiclesis" is called down on a sacrificial victim in the sacramental shape of whisky and haggis, which is pierced by a knife and then consumed, communion-style, by the assembled congregation. (2011)

Perhaps the most striking depiction of the haggis as symbolic cadaver in the context of the Burns Supper occurs in Scottish playwright Liz Lochhead's play *Jock Tamson's bairns*, performed by Communicado theatre company at Glasgow's Tramway theatre in January 1990 (see Lochhead 1990). In the play's opening scene, the audience is witness to the funeral of the play's anti-hero, referred to simply as "the Drunk Man" (an allusion to Scottish poet Hugh MacDiarmid's work *A drunk man looks at the thistle* (1926)). The Drunk Man descends into hell, envisioned as a post-apocalyptic Scottish urban landscape, where he is met by a gang of "bairns" (children) who have forgotten all of their customs and traditions. Recognising the resemblance of the Drunk Man's fat corpse to a haggis, the bairns realise that this is the time of year when they should be

celebrating the ritual of the “Burnt Supper.” The Drunk Man’s corpse thus becomes the haggis in the bairns’ infernal recreation of the ceremony. After cutting him open, the bairns discover inside their “haggis” all the shibboleths of Scottishness that constitute the symbolic iconography by which Scotland has traditionally represented itself to the world (cf. Chapter 1), including yard upon yard of tartan, the Loch Ness Monster, and Bonnie Prince Charlie. Dancer Frank McConnell, who played the role of the Drunk Man in the original production, explains that “[t]he piece was ultimately an examination of what it meant to be Scottish in 1990” (2011). This example succinctly encodes the haggis as both symbolic cadaver and as a collection of expressive cultural texts about Scottishness.

## Conclusion

This chapter has explored the motif of the grotesque body within the corpus of expressive cultural material about haggis that developed from the mid 1700s onwards, drawing its illustrations from both English and Scottish culture. We began by exploring how exoteric English conceptualisations of the beggarly Scottish body as both dirty and diseased manifested themselves in relation to diet and eating habits, in the form of the anti-Scottish food slurs that were constructed and disseminated with English cultural discourse during the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. Central to the exoteric conceptualisation of the beggarly Scottish body as dirty and diseased was a fear of contagion on the part of the cultural outsider who finds him- or herself obliged, unwittingly or otherwise, to ingest the food that has been touched by that body.

The discussion then focused on two key manifestations of the grotesque body motif within the corpus of expressive cultural materials about haggis. Firstly, many depictions of the dish exhibit a preoccupation with its supposed physiological effects on the bodies of its consumers. While some of these accounts function as simply one more way for the English to belittle the Scots by mocking their incapacitated bodies, the majority of the examples discussed here focus instead on the dish's effect on the bodies of English eaters who find themselves forced, for one reason or another, to sample it. I argued that in such accounts the healthy, well-ordered English body is itself rendered grotesque, losing all control over its bodily functions and becoming both dirty and diseased. Moreover, in some of these texts, the body of the eater becomes conflated with the haggis itself, as illustrated in depictions of exploding or uncontrollable haggises that mimic the uncontrollable bodies of their unfortunate English eaters. At the cultural level, such accounts can be interpreted as figuring the Scots themselves as "indigestible food" in the stomach of the English nation, just as the Scottish foods are represented as wreaking havoc with English digestive systems. In a similar way, some Scottish accounts depict haggises and other Scottish dishes defying consumption and violently inflicting themselves on their English eaters in a manner that suggests Scotland's active resistance to incorporation by its dominant southern neighbour. Scottish portrayals of exploding and uncontrollable haggises, meanwhile, can be read as celebrations of the grotesque excess of the Scottish body, purposely challenging English taste.

The materials presented in the final section of the chapter reinforced the argument that the haggis in such examples stands in for the Scottish body. In this section, I

discussed accounts from both Scottish and English culture that portray the haggis *as* a grotesque body. Among the most prominent metaphors featured in such portrayals are those of the foreign body, the diseased or contaminated body, and the symbolic cadaver. Again, such depictions cannot simply be interpreted as expressions of culinary stereotypes of Scottishness on the part of cultural outsiders, since they have long been significant elements within Scottish culture itself, suggesting a propensity to make creative play with such stereotypes, humorously exploiting English trepidation concerning Scottish cultural difference.

**Chapter 4. “The heather and haggis clan have had their fling”:  
Contesting Authenticity in Expressive Cultural Representations of  
Scottishness<sup>1</sup>**

In the previous two chapters, we saw how the emergence of haggis as a culinary stereotype was based on an exoterically imposed representation of Scottishness, and how the grotesque body motif within much of the expressive cultural materials surrounding the dish expresses competing conceptualisations of and attitudes towards Scottishness on the part of both in- and outsiders. This chapter goes on to explore haggis's status as a contested symbol of Scottishness among Scots themselves. I focus in particular on the use of the dish, and the expressive cultural traditions surrounding it, to exemplify what scholars and others have often characterised as a negative, inauthentic, trivialising and outdated stereotype of Scottish cultural identity. Haggis has long been recognised as part of a symbolic iconography – also including tartan, bagpipes, mountains, castles and whisky – by which Scotland has traditionally represented itself to the outside world, and which, in turn, often forms the basis of outsiders' perceptions and representations of Scottish ethnicity (McCrone, Morris, and Kiely 1995, 50; cf. Butler 1998). Indeed, collectively the components of this iconography are often referred to within Scottish folk and popular discourse as the “tartan-and-haggis” or “heather-and-haggis image” of

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<sup>1</sup> The quotation in my chapter title is taken from a letter to the editor of the *Glasgow Evening Times* in October 1978, to which the heading “Haggis image” was assigned (see Thomas 1978).

Scottishness, although scholars working on cultural representations of Scottishness typically refer to them as *tartanry*.

As David McCrone wrote in 2001: "There are few systematic analyses of tartanry, the set of symbols and images, by Scottish intellectuals" (132), although, as we will see below, there have been numerous scholarly critiques of this mode of representing Scottishness. The situation in 2011 is only slightly improved. This chapter seeks to contribute towards the small but growing body of analyses of tartanry and its individual components, and to demonstrate the unique perspective that the folklorist has to offer to this field of enquiry. I begin by briefly surveying the role of haggis as a contested symbol within Scottish folk, popular and elite cultural discourse. The remainder of the chapter is devoted to a case study of the role of haggis in the context of the Burns Supper and other public celebrations of Scottishness, and the subsequent debates concerning the authenticity of such traditions. I argue that in order fully to understand the issues at play in this context, scholars must pay attention to the ideological underpinnings not only of the traditions themselves, but also of those who critique their cultural legitimacy.

In part in reaction against the stereotypical imagery of the Scottish iconography discussed above, haggis has come to be used in folk, popular and elite discourse as a byword for everything that is inauthentic about cultural representations of Scottishness. The earliest pejorative reference to the "tartan-and-haggis image" that I have located to date occurs in the opening paragraphs of G. Gregory Smith's influential work *Scottish literature: Character and influence* (1919). Discussing English critics' misconceptions with regard to Scottish literature, Smith writes:

Many in the South have a ready touchstone for the detection of Scottish quality. By an easy metaphor they transfer to Scottish literature the eccentricities which have vexed their five senses in their dealings with the aggressive North. They think of the freakish colour-schemes of the tartans, of the skirl of the pipes, of the reek of haggis, of the flavour of John Barleycorn..., of the rudeness of the thistle. They seem to see, hear, and gust these glaring, noisy, redolent things at every turn in Northern art. (1919, 1-2)

Smith refers to those who subscribe to this mistaken impression of Scottishness as "tartan and haggis critics" (2).

By the 1960s, debates about the "tartan-and-haggis" or "heather-and-haggis image" surfaced regularly in the pages of Scottish newspapers such as the *Glasgow Herald* and *Evening Times*. These two epithets, and numerous variants thereof, were used with reference to a surprising variety of cultural, economic and political contexts and to support a range of arguments and ideological perspectives. In 1965, for example, the *Herald* reported on a speech given at the annual conference of the Institution of Municipal Engineers in Glasgow by then Secretary of State for Scotland, William Ross. According to Ross, "Scotland was not just a country of 'heather and hooch-aye, haggis and bagpipes' ... Above all it was a country of engineers and engineers would do much to relieve the pressure of urban congestion in Britain by making use of the wide open spaces in Scotland for future development" (Modern cities.... 1965, 7). Five years later, the chairman of what was then Scotland's largest ever careers fair, "Opportunity Scotland '70," was quoted in the *Herald* as stating that: "We ... want to open up a new and more accurate picture of Scotland in the minds of young people outside Scotland... Some of them may still have the impression that this is a country of nothing but haggis and



heather, when it is, in fact, a great place to live and work in and not nearly so crowded as it is down South" (Exhibits valued at £2m.... 1970, 14; cf. Gibson 1970).

In response to a letter arguing for greater support for Scottish factories, meanwhile, retail grocery manager Malcolm McGookin wrote to the editor of the *Herald* in 1981 to suggest that the problem with Scottish products was that "[a] great number of them prefer to retain their 'tartan and haggis' image." According to McGookin, "[t]his habit must parochialise the item. English or Welsh folk ... won't choose to buy regularly a product which looks like a Scots holiday souvenir!" (1981, 8). And the following year Patrick Campbell wrote to argue that tourists to Scotland "are continually served with tartan trash, falsified history, and all the glories of a degenerate 'haggis and bagpipes' subculture. The sooner they realise what Gaelic and Scottish culture really is – and in what a desperately oppressed situation it is – the better for them, for us and for Gaelic" (Campbell 1982, 8). A similar interpretation of the "haggis and heather image" is encoded in a cartoon originally published during the 1979 Scottish devolution referendum campaign (see Figure 4.1). The cartoon depicts a campaigner for the "yes" vote – dressed in a kilt, tweed jacket, Tam o' Shanter bonnet, brogues and tartan tie – proclaiming, without any apparent sense of irony, that "[i]t is essential that we get rid once and for all of the haggis and heather image."

Despite the prominence of such critical perspectives, however, other participants in the ongoing debate defended the authenticity of the "tartan-and-haggis image." Writing in the *Evening Times* in August 1972, for example, Jack House observes that:



Figure 4.1. Cartoon from the 1979 Scottish devolution referendum campaign, depicting a campaigner for the "yes" vote – dressed in a kilt, tweed jacket, Tam o' Shanter bonnet, brogues and tartan tie – proclaiming, without any apparent sense of irony, that "[i]t is essential that we get rid once and for all of the haggis and heather image" (Glasgow Print Studio Gallery Ltd.)

At this time of the year, when tourists are flooding our land, some bright boy is inevitably going to say – “The thing about Scotland is that we must get rid of the haggis, whisky, and bagpipes image.”

I can’t tell you how many times I’ve heard this asinine observation – but I’ve always noticed that the chap who says it looks round expecting a burst of applause.

Well, he won’t get a single pat of the hands from me, and I imagine if he expressed these feelings to the tourists they’d look at him incredulously and then start booing. Because they want the haggis, whisky, and bagpipes image.

And why shouldn’t they? .... (House 1972, 2)<sup>2</sup>

Similarly, in a letter to the editor of the *Evening Times* in 1978, William Watt asks:

Why all the fuss about our “Haggis and Heather” image. Millions of tourists go to Amsterdam every spring to see the tulips. Its [*sic*] very big business and the Dutch know it and take advantage of it, as we in Scotland should. According to recent figures 13,000,000 tourists this year have spent £502,000,000 in Scotland. So whatever the image they must like it, and they keep coming back. (Watt 1978, 7; cf. Hall 1989)

More recently, the ambivalence felt by many Scots with regard to the authenticity of the “tartan-and-haggis image” surfaced in the controversy generated by “Scotland’s Day” (November 30, 2000) at the Millennium Dome in Greenwich, a carefully choreographed celebration of Scottishness at which “guests [dined] on haggis, while youngsters [turned] up in the ‘McLennium’ tartan.” An editorial in the *Scotsman* newspaper voiced the growing concern of many Scots over the use of such symbols when it took issue with “the narrow, backward-looking range of ‘icons’ selected to represent 21st-century Scotland” at this event; the author commented that while “[no]-one wants to

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<sup>2</sup> For a reader’s response to House’s article, see Macpherson 1972. Macpherson contends that “All this ‘haggis and bagpipes’ rubbish may appeal to our American friends, but we are not, I hope, going to pass round the can for dollars like a charity collector – at the expense of our self respect.” In contrast, she argues for the promotion of “the real Scotland as it is today – an outward-looking nation ready to try new ideas.”

repudiate tartan and haggis, ... Scotland is more than that" (Scotland at the Dome 2000, 15). However, one of the event's organisers defended the image of Scotland which it presented, saying: "These things are what Scotland's all about. Scots may not like it but the rest of the world wants the haggis and the shortbread and the pipes" (quoted in McNeil and Foster 2000, 8).

Several contemporary tourist guides, meanwhile, make meta-discursive references to the iconography of the dominant tourism discourse as a means of differentiating their own products and approaches. Thus, for example, the back-cover blurb of the Lonely Planet guide to Scotland invites its readers to "go beyond bagpipes and haggis clichés with our expert authors, and get the insider view with this bestselling guide" (Wilson and Murphy 2006). Similarly, a brochure designed to attract tourists to the Scottish town of Falkirk urges potential visitors: "If you are looking for an alternative to ... the heather and haggis for your visit to Scotland, then try the Falkirk area" (Falkirk Inspired n.d.). Clearly, deconstructing the "tartan-and-haggis image" in order to penetrate "beyond" or "behind" it to an alternative, more "real" Scotland has become almost as prominent a mode of cultural expression within Scottish folk and popular discourse as has the promotion of that image itself. An example from 1987 makes this goal explicit. Referring to Kenneth Roy's book *Travels in a small country*, the *Herald* states that it "gives a remarkable insight into contemporary Scotland," explaining that Roy had purposely set out "to find the real nation behind the pretty postcards, tartan and haggis and music-hall stereotypes" (Tomorrow 1987). A tongue-in-cheek reference to this strain of discourse is encoded in a poster for a recent exhibition of Scottish painting at the

Georgia Museum of Art, which guarantees that the exhibition is “99% haggis free” (see Figure 4.2).

In recent research by Fiona McLean and Stephen Cooke, meanwhile, Scots and others were questioned as to how they wished to see Scottish identity represented in the new Museum of Scotland in Edinburgh, which opened in November 1998. Several of the answers cited by the authors were framed negatively, with references to “tartan and haggis” or “haggis and kilts” used repeatedly, not in the literal sense, but to encapsulate the kinds of outdated and inauthentic representations that respondents did *not* wish to see in the museum (McLean and Cooke 2003a, 2003b; Cooke and McLean 2002). When asked what the Museum “should be saying about Scotland,” for example, one potential visitor responded: “Not tartan and haggis. I am very much against that. I think we are sufficiently intelligent people that we can do away with that image.” Similarly, a respondent who was interviewed after visiting the new Museum stated that it appeared to be consciously striving to present an “image of Scotland” that was “more forward-looking rather than tartan and haggis” (quoted in McLean and Cooke 2003a, 158). McLean and Cooke interpret such responses as evidence that “visitors to the Museum of Scotland are more interested in the ‘real’ Scotland than in an artificial Scotland,” reflecting “a desire ... to be informed of the ‘real’ story of a nation rather than reinforcing the myths of the nation” (2003a, 159). They explain that a similar emphasis on deconstructing so-called myths is encoded in the Museum’s own official policy: “A decision was made at an early stage of the creation of the Museum to challenge the ‘myths’ of Scotland and instead to represent the ‘real’ history of the Scottish people”



Figure 4.2. Advertisement for a travelling exhibition of paintings from the National Gallery of Scotland at the Georgia Museum of Art (1999), guaranteeing that the exhibition is "99% haggis free" (The Ideamill, Inc.)

(2003a, 156). This mission statement is encapsulated in the title of an article authored by the director of the National Museums of Scotland, Mark Jones, in a special issue of the *Museums Journal* on the topic of "Museums and national identity" (see Jones 1995). Jones's piece is entitled "From haggis to home rule," succinctly encoding a suggestion that representations of Scottishness must progress beyond the "tartan-and-haggis image" in order to engage with the modern-day realities of a culturally confident, politically autonomous Scotland.

Significantly, McLean and Cooke themselves appear to subscribe to the dichotomy between reality and myth, or authenticity and fakery, on which such conceptualisations of Scottishness and its cultural representations are based. Despite acknowledging the complexities of myth as a "set of cultural practices," an ongoing process of (re)interpretation and negotiation of meaning, they go on to state that Scotland's own national symbols and myths represent "an invention of tradition to perpetuate the [country's] sentimental appeal" (2003a, 155). Scottish myths, they argue, constitute a "romantic dreamscape" within which "the identity of Scotland is portrayed as static, unchanging, its origins buried deep in the mists of time," an assertion strangely at odds with their earlier characterisation of myths as "potent forces in contemporary lives, being constantly reworked to make sense of memories and lives" (2003a, 155). In a similar way, we saw how despite recognising the potency of haggis as a metaphor for Scottish identity as a mixture or amalgam of competing perspectives and expressive cultural discourses, the *Bottle Imp* editorial discussed in Chapter 1 goes on to present an

interpretation of haggis and other elements of the symbolic iconography of tartanry as manifestations of *false Scottishness* ("Unreliable Narrator" 2009, [1]).

As these last examples suggest, derogatory attitudes towards the symbols incorporated within the iconography of tartanry can also be traced in much academic writing on Scottish identity from the early twentieth century onwards, and no doubt such ideas influence each other as they flow between elite, popular and folk culture. As Caroline McCracken-Flesher and others have noted, the set of symbols referred to as tartanry has typically been "maligned" by critics as "a trivializing signification of Scottishness," a "hegemonic discourse" or "mythic structure" that "present[s] a debased image of the country" and must therefore be "exorcised from our culture and from our conception of what it is to be Scottish" (McCracken-Flesher 2002, 110; McCrone 2001, 145, 131; Cameron and Scullion 1996, 52; McCrone, Morris, and Kiely 1995, 52, 54). Hugh Trevor-Roper's widely cited "demolition job on tartanry" (McCrone 2001, 132) in Hobsbawm and Ranger's *The invention of tradition* (1983), and the work of other proponents of what Cairns Craig refers to as "the 'Scotch Myths' analysis of ... Scottish culture" (1996, 105) epitomise the view summarised here. The use of the term "Scotch Myths" to refer to this school of analysis derives from an exhibition of that title held as part of the Edinburgh International Festival in 1981, curated by Barbara and Murray Grigor, and devoted to exposing the false and trivialising perspective on Scottishness represented by the iconography of tartanry. In a similar way, McCrone writes that "[m]uch of the discussion [of Scottish culture] in the final decades of the twentieth century has focused around deconstructing the 'Scotch myths' of tartanry" and related



discourses (2001, 138). Murray Pittock puts the point more forcefully, arguing that “[i]n Scottish popular history and cultural studies the exposure of so-called ‘myths’ to which our cultural identity has been in thrall has become quite an industry” (1995, 117). In a subsequent article referring specifically to material cultural representations of Scottishness, Pittock adds that “[t]artan in particular and Scottish souvenirs in general have come to be seen as presenting a damaging ‘myth,’ either to be corrected by a tirade about authenticity or to be diluted in the postmodernist florilegia of the twentieth-century collection in the Museum of Scotland” (2007, 65).

This approach has its roots in the Scottish Renaissance Movement of the interwar period, and particularly the poet Hugh MacDiarmid’s virulent attacks on what he saw as the debased cultural forms presented in the context of Scottish popular theatre. As David Goldie writes, MacDiarmid’s work on music hall, in particular, sets the tone for the critiques of tartantry undertaken by subsequent scholars belonging to the Scotch Myths school, including Tom Nairn (2003), Colin McArthur (1981/82; 1982; 1983; 1993; 1996; 2005), and the early writings of Cairns Craig (e.g., Craig 1982). As Goldie explains:

Based partly in MacDiarmid’s modernism, partly in Gramscian thinking about hegemony and false consciousness, and partly in Adorno and Horkheimer’s strictures against the culture industry, [the] arguments [of the “Scotch Myths” school] have often turned on the ways popular forms impoverish the culture more generally: characterising popular culture – or as Nairn memorably called it “sub-cultural Scotchery” – as a component of a cultural hegemony that makes serious or authentic expression more or less impossible. (2006)<sup>3</sup>

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<sup>3</sup> In a similar way, Pittock, again referring specifically to material culture in modern Scotland, states that “it is arguable that the anti-tartan cultural commentators have displayed a mixture of a modernist disdain for the mass market and a post-modernist stress on Scottish material cultural representation as composed of ‘invented’ traditions, which is itself contradictory, and far from as cutting edge as it sometimes represents

More recent scholarship on Scottishness and its expressive cultural representations, however, has begun the task of reevaluating such "received notions of tartanry" (Cameron and Scullion 1996, 45) and of deconstructing the assumptions and ideological underpinnings of the Scotch Myths school itself. Such scholars have identified several key issues with the approach adopted in earlier critiques of the iconography of tartanry. McCrone, for example, makes the crucial point that the work of those intellectuals writing in the Scotch Myths mode "itself represents a dominant discourse which ... has to be examined critically" (2001, 131). Firstly, then, this discourse sets up a false dichotomy between authentic and inauthentic representations of Scottishness that is rooted in the assumption that the analyst him- or herself has the sole power to determine what is (and is not) an authentic cultural expression. Moreover, the Scotch Myths approach is based on an inherently and overly pessimistic perspective on the ways in which Scottishness has been and continues to be represented culturally (cf. McCrone 2001, 129; Beveridge and Turnbull 1982; Beveridge and Turnbull 1989). It not only assumes that the discourse of tartanry has been promoted at the expense of all other possible perspectives on Scottishness, but that its influence has had an entirely negative impact on Scottish culture and self-perception (cf. McCrone 2001, 131), an assumption that more recent scholarship in this area has begun to reassess (e.g., Goldie 2000; McCracken-Flesher 2002; Brown 2005a; Brown 2005b; Goldie 2006; Brown 2010). Moreover, the arguments of the Scotch Myths school may sound good in theory, but do

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itself" (2007, 65). For further discussions of the Scotch Myths school, see, for example, Craig (1996); McCrone (2001, 127-48); and Bell (2004).

not necessarily play out in practice. As Goldie argues, for example, such scholarship is based on "a set of assumptions about the reach of popular culture and its power to repress more serious forms of art and argument that seem to fall down in their real-world applications" (2006). Pittock, meanwhile, summarises these issues thus:

[The] exposure of "myths" is held to be of service. I cannot find it so.... [T]he destruction of myths is itself a manifestation of the values of a centring "British" history. The attack on tartanry is only a further attack on self, yet another example of those earlier attacks which themselves were responsible for simultaneously limiting and exaggerating the role of tartan in Scottish identity. (1995, 117-18)

A further set of issues that have been identified in relation to the central tenets of the Scotch Myths school concerns its lack of attention to the reception of the imagery of tartanry, and its failure to recognise that its audiences, both in Scotland and elsewhere, are not simply passive consumers of hegemonic discourses imposed from above (cf. Beveridge and Turnbull 1989, 14). As Craig Beveridge and Ronald Turnbull point out, identities are never singular; we all assume multiple identities and affiliations, and interact with multiple discourses as both creators and consumers, on a daily basis. Thus an individual's "response to tartanry is not uncritical assimilation, but a complex negotiation dependent on the beliefs and values which are bound up with these other concerns" (Beveridge and Turnbull 1989, 14). Moreover, the arguments of the Scotch Myths school not only deny any sense of agency or creativity to the makers, performers and consumers of such discourses, but assume that they are taking them just as seriously as are the scholars themselves. In other words, they ignore the possibility of reflexive responses such as parody, irony, playfulness, reappropriation and other complex

mediations of meaning. According to this negative perspective, then, people are shaped by cultural representations, not vice versa.

This theme has recently been taken up by scholars of Scottish popular theatre and entertainment. Thus, for example, Alasdair Cameron and Adrienne Scullion have argued that the imagery of tartanry "is infinitely more adaptable, complicated and relevant than critics have hitherto allowed" (1996, 57), and have called for attention to "the complexities and ironies of the exchange that is involved" in its ongoing (re)creation and manipulation by both producers and consumers (Goldie 2000, 12; cf. Maloney 2003, 14-15; McCrone 2001, 141). Further insights into these and related issues are also being developed within the growing literature on representations and perceptions of Scottishness among diaspora populations worldwide.<sup>4</sup> Folklorists are ideally positioned to explore the complexities involved in the negotiation of tartanry and its meanings in the context of everyday life. However, relatively little work has been done to date on how cultural formations such as tartanry are perceived and negotiated in practice within the cultural expressions of Scots themselves.

Finally, the Scotch Myths school has typically ignored or oversimplified both the complex processes by which the constituent elements of the iconography of tartanry came to be incorporated into that discourse, and the complex discursive uses to which such symbols have been put by both in- and outsiders. In the previous chapters, I have sought to redress this imbalance by investigating the process by which haggis emerged as a

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<sup>4</sup> See, for example, McKay 1992; Hague 2001; Boyd, Cotter, and Gardiner 2002; Hague 2002; Chhabra, Healy, and Sills 2003; Germaná 2003; Crane, Hamilton, and Wilson 2004; Ray 2005; McCarthy 2006; Basu 2007; Tye and Latta 2007.

negative stereotype of Scottishness within English cultural discourse during the mid to late 1700s. I have also explored the competing exoteric and esoteric conceptualisations of Scottishness encoded in the corpus of expressive cultural materials surrounding the dish. In the section that follows, I go on to examine haggis's status as a contested symbol among Scots themselves, through a case study of the dish's evolving role in the tradition of the Burns Supper and other public celebrations of Scottishness. As part of this case study, I focus on how Burns's poem "To a Haggis," and the rituals that have developed around it in the context of the Burns Supper, have become implicated in the debates surrounding the authenticity and cultural legitimacy of such traditions as means of representing Scottish national identity. I argue that the ongoing vitality of this debate itself reflects the dish's powerful status as a contested symbol, continually generative of multiple and often competing meanings and perspectives on Scottishness.

### **The Role of Haggis in the Burns Supper and Other Public Celebrations of Scottishness: Emergence, Evolution and Debate**

Thanks in large part to Burns's increasing renown as Scotland's "national bard," the influence of his poem "To a Haggis" on the subsequent development of Scottish culinary nationalism throughout the nineteenth century was profound and far-reaching. In this section I offer some observations on the dish's role as a symbol of culinary national identity in the context of the Burns Supper tradition that emerged, shortly after the poet's death in 1796, as an annual celebration of his life and work. This calendar

custom's core elements include a meal of haggis and other symbolically Scottish fare; a series of speeches, toasts and recitations of Burns's poetry; and performances of Scottish music and dance. As Mary Ellen Cohane notes, the recitation of "To a Haggis" has been "at the heart of the celebration" of the Burns Supper since its earliest days and has come to be surrounded by "a larger ritual" in which the haggis is "carried in by a cook in full [cook's] regalia, preceded by a piper" and "addressed" with the words of Burns's poem (1985, 25). After considering the origins and development of the dish's role within the Burns Supper, this section focuses in particular on the custom of ceremonially "piping in" the haggis, now almost ubiquitous at Burns Suppers the world over. I trace the emergence of this custom at Burns Suppers and other public celebrations of Scottishness during the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, going on to explore the subsequent debates concerning its authenticity as an expressive cultural form and as a means of representing Scottish identity.

In light of these debates, I argue that the dish's central role within the Burns Supper tradition contributed, in large part, to the incorporation of haggis into the symbolic iconography of Scottishness that has subsequently become so hotly contested within Scottish intellectual thought, as well as folk and popular discourse. Increasingly, the Burns Supper provided a forum not only for commemorating Burns himself, but also for the expression of Scottish national identity in general (Brown 1984, 117-39). As Alex Tyrrell writes, most scholars agree that "the celebration of hero figures" such as Burns played a key role in "help[ing] to give Scots a notion of the past and to shape the forms of Scottish national identity that emerged in the nineteenth century" (2005, 43; cf. Finlay

1997a; Finlay 1997b). To a large extent, the so-called cult of Burns gradually appropriated the poet as "the quintessence of [the Scottish] nation" (Tyrrell 2005, 42). Thus the expressive cultural forms that were incorporated into the Burns Supper tradition, food and drink included, similarly came to be identified as symbolic of a wider sense of Scottishness.

Tyrrell calls for research into public commemorations of Burns in specific contexts. Though scholars have frequently dismissed such memorialisations as manifestations of a Victorian cult of sentimentality, Tyrrell presents a more nuanced reading of the nineteenth-century "obsession" with Burns as a contested site of memory. Adopting Pierre Nora's concept of the *lieu de mémoire*, he asserts that: "If Robert Burns is to be seen as a 'lieu de mémoire,' Nora's caveat should be kept in mind: public memory is pluralist and 'conflictual,' not monolithic. There is a need for research into the precise circumstances in which Burns's memory was celebrated by a wide variety of groups at different times and places" (Tyrrell 2005, 43). I argue that the debates surrounding haggis's role in the Burns Supper and other public celebrations of Scottishness exemplify the notion of such celebrations as contested sites of memory, within which competing conceptualisations of Scottish cultural identity and of appropriate ways to represent it are brought into contact. Although there exists a considerable body of scholarship on the cultural phenomenon of the Burns cult, and an increasing recognition of its ideological complexities (e.g., Tyrrell 2005),<sup>5</sup> very little

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<sup>5</sup> For scholarship on the "cult" or "myth" of Burns and his construction as a symbol of Scottish national identity, see, for example, Brown 1984; Davis 1998; Finlay

work has yet been conducted into the Burns Supper itself as a performance event, and it is here that the folklorist has a particularly valuable contribution to make to this overall field of inquiry.

Mary Ellen Brown's important work on *Burns and tradition* (1984), which explores both Burns's uses of tradition and tradition's uses of Burns, includes a chapter on the evolution of the Burns Supper, during which she highlights the need for critical attention to the performance aspects of the event. Brown conceptualises the Burns Supper as "a multigeneric celebration incorporating foodways, customs, recitations, songs [and] folk speech," and "structured into participatory and performance modes" (1984, 138); this represents the fullest attempt to date to set out a framework for analysis of individual events in specific contexts. Meanwhile, recent articles by Alex Tyrrell, Patricia Hill, and Diane Kirkby (2007), and by Elizabeth Buettner (2002), trace the development of Burns Suppers and other public celebrations of Scottishness in nineteenth-century Britain and Australia and in late imperial India, respectively. Cohane's case study of a Burns Supper held at the Argyle restaurant in Kearny, New Jersey (1985), and my own article on the 2007 Newfoundland and Labrador St. Andrew's Society Burns Supper in St. John's (Fraser 2008), consider individual events from a performance perspective. There remains a vast amount of work to be done in this area. In the pages that follow I focus in particular on the role of haggis in the context of the Burns Supper and other public celebrations of Scottishness, and on the ceremony that has

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1997a; Finlay 1997b; Hammond 1993; Kirkwood 2000; McGuirok 1987; McGuirok 1997; Roe 1997; Strauss 1989; Tyrrell 2005.



come to surround its consumption in this context, including the recitation of Burns's "To a Haggis," and eventually the custom of ceremonially "piping in" the haggis.

As Brown observes, the consumption of a shared meal in which haggis features prominently, and the accompanying recitation of Burns's "To a Haggis," have been core elements of the Burns Supper since its inception. Indeed, both the dish and the poem were at the heart of the "proto-celebrations" that she identifies as having taken place during the poet's own lifetime, providing a template for the commemorative events that were to emerge soon after his death (1984, 120). In fact, what Brown refers to in her discussion of the proto-celebrations is a series of etiological narratives concerning the circumstances surrounding the composition of "To a Haggis," all of which are based around the idea of extempore oral composition of all or part of the work. Thus, while Cohane notes that the haggis ceremony that takes place as part of the present-day Burns Supper is an ostensive re-enactment of the meal depicted in "To a Haggis" itself (1985, 25), it can also be interpreted as a re-enactment of the occasion on which Burns himself is said to have originally composed the poem in performance.

The earliest known account of the poem's composition occurs in a letter written by Burns's close friend John Richmond to the Burns scholar James Grierson in December 1817, in response to a request from Grierson for information about "the occasion that gave rise to Burns Poem [*sic*] on the Haggis" (Richmond 1817; see Figure 4.3). According to Richmond, in 1780s Ayrshire a group of friends gathered annually at the end of the harvest, at the house of David Shaw in the village of Craigie Kirkdyke, just south of Kilmarnock. The group referred to itself as "the Haggis club," on account of "a



Sheeps Haggis" forming part of the bill of fare on these occasions.<sup>6</sup> Richmond goes on to describe how "[a]bout eight days" prior to the meeting of 1786 one of the members of the group, Alexander Walker, "engaged Burns to meet him alone at Craigie Kirkdyke, where they should dine upon a Haggis."<sup>7</sup> He continues:

The novelty of Dining on a Haggis was much the Conversation at the engagement and on the Munday following He [i.e., Burns] told me he had prepared an Adress to the Haggis, On the Saturday following I accompanied Burns to Craigie Kirkdyke And was much surprised at meeting with so large a company,—<sup>8</sup> At Dinner it was hinted to Matt. Dickie the preses to ask Burns to say the Grace He rose up, and prefaced by saying He would address the [haggis? (word missing)] by the Lord.

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<sup>6</sup> James Mackay notes that David Shaw was a solicitor in Kilmarnock (1993, 281). The village referred to as Craigie Kirkdyke is now known simply as Craigie. Such gatherings would not have been unusual during this period. Brown notes that "[m]any accounts of the eighteenth century mention the general predilection of groups of men to gather to share a meal, often breakfast" (1984, 119).

<sup>7</sup> In the only published transcription of Richmond's letter, which appears in Robert Fitzhugh's *Robert Burns: His associates and contemporaries*, the date of the meeting in question is given as 1785 (see Fitzhugh 1943, 36-38), a date that is repeated by Brown (1984, 120), Mackay (1993, 281), and Crawford (2009, 246). In the original manuscript, however, Richmond has apparently amended the final digit of the year from a 5 to a 6. A date of composition at the end of the harvest in 1786 makes much more sense than the harvest of 1785, since the poem was first published in the *Edinburgh Caledonian Mercury* on December 19, 1786 (see Burns 1786). I wish to extend special thanks to Dr. Alan Borthwick of the National Archives of Scotland for preparing the previously uncatalogued collection to which Richmond's manuscript belongs, specifically to enable me to consult it during my visit to Edinburgh in summer 2010.

<sup>8</sup> Unfortunately, Richmond does not state exactly how large the company was on this occasion. Earlier in his letter he lists the names and occupations of some of those present, including Matthew Dickie ("writer in Edinburgh"), William Paterson ("writer Kilmarnock"), William Brown ("writer there [i.e., Kilmarnock]"), James Neil ("writer Ayr, of Shaw or Barnweil"), Alexander Walker ("writer Edin'"), and Robert Burns. However, he concludes his list with "&c.," indicating that it is incomplete. Presumably David Shaw would have been present also, given that the gathering was held at his house. Even so, a total of six or seven men, plus Richmond himself, hardly seems sufficient to have warranted the latter's professed surprise "at meeting with so large a company."

And repeated the address to the Haggis, there was no laughing in the company every one thought that it was composed Extempory but the Poet told them, He came prepared for the Haggis but not for the company, It was a Hearty Jovial meeting.... [all *sic*] (Richmond 1817)

Brown points out that Richmond's letter was written "some twenty-one years after Burns' death and thirty-two years after the event he described" (1984, 119), and the lapse in time probably helps to account for the inconsistencies that characterise his account. To be fair, he prefaces his description of the event by qualifying that it is accurate "as nearly as I can remember" (1817). Perhaps the most notable discrepancy is between his statement that the group referred to itself as "the Haggis club," which implies that dining on haggis was a regular feature of its gatherings, and his subsequent suggestion that "[t]he novelty of Dining on a Haggis" at the 1786 meeting was sufficient to make it a hot topic of conversation in the days leading up to the event, and to prompt Burns to compose an address in its honour. Similarly, Richmond's account omits some important details, neglecting to mention, for example, whether the 1786 meeting was the first that Burns – or, indeed, Richmond himself – had attended. Did Walker and Burns also dine on haggis during their earlier meeting, and what was the purpose of this meeting? Did Walker suggest to Burns that he should compose an address to the haggis for the following Saturday? Most importantly, we have no way of knowing how close the address that Burns delivered on this occasion was to the versions of the text that subsequently appeared in print, which themselves varied considerably until after the publication of the Edinburgh edition of Burns's *Works* in April 1787 (see Burns 1786; Burns 1787a; and Burns 1787b), illustrating the poet's habit of "constantly reworking" his creations (Cairney 2001, 136).

These inconsistencies and omissions notwithstanding, Richmond's letter is intriguing in its status as the earliest, the most expansive, and the only known eye-witness account of the circumstances purportedly surrounding the composition of "To a Haggis." It is noteworthy that according to Richmond, the members of the company erroneously believed that Burns had composed the poem extemporaneously, a feat that apparently stunned them into silence. Yet Richmond clearly states that Burns had told him five days prior to the event that "he had prepared an Adress to the Haggis," and adds that the poet afterwards informed the company that he had "c[o]me prepared." Nonetheless, the account indicates that Burns must have performed the poem without the use of a written text, and that it was recited as a form of "Grace" before the meal. Both of these features, together with the perception (mistaken or otherwise) of extemporaneous composition, are also core features of the other two etiological narratives surrounding the poem's origins.

A second, contrasting account of the poem's composition was published in the *Edinburgh Literary Journal* in November 1829. According to this version, Burns composed "To a Haggis" at the home of his "great crony" Robert Morrison,<sup>9</sup> a cabinetmaker in Mauchline, Ayrshire, "after partaking liberally of [a haggis] ... prepared by Mrs Morrison" (Unpublished fragment.... 1829, 334). A variant of this account holds that Burns delivered the original last verse of the poem as an "impromptu *Grace*" at a friend's house, "where it was so well received that he was induced to extend the subject" (Douglas 1877, 2:44; cf. Chambers 1896, 2:28, 4:318-19). In his 1877 edition of Burns's

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<sup>9</sup> Various commentators give the name as Robert Mor[r]ison; John Morrison (e.g., Kinsley 1968; Mackay 1993); and Peter Morison (e.g., Mackay 1990).

*Works*, William Scott Douglas lends weight to this version of events, claiming to "have been informed by a descendant of Mr Morison, cabinetmaker in Mauchline, that such an incident did occur on one occasion, when a haggis formed part of a Sunday meal in his ancestor's house" (1877, 2:44; cf. Aitken 1893, 2:104). As late as 1987, Mackay notes (apparently citing a personal communication) that "there is a local tradition that ... Burns ... was in the habit of joining the Morison family for lunch after Sunday morning services and that on one such occasion he composed the *Address to a Haggis*" (1990, 501). This is perhaps also the occasion that Allan Cunningham alludes to in his 1834 edition of Burns's *Works*, in which he states that "Burns, it is said, once uttered something like this poem ['To a Haggis'] in prose when called on to say grace where a Haggis was on the board, and the applause which he obtained induced him to work it into verse" (1834, 2:39).

A third version of events, again suggesting extemporaneous composition of at least part of the poem, first appears in James Hogg and William Motherwell's 1834 edition of Burns's *Works*. Hogg and Motherwell state that the poem was "written in the house of Mr Andrew Bruce, Castle Hill, Edinburgh, where a haggis one day made part of the dinner" (1834, 1:151). Subsequent commentators have interpreted Hogg and Motherwell's description as implying "almost impromptu" composition of the poem (Douglas 1877, 2:44), "almost in its entirety" (Chambers 1896, 2:28). James Kinsley, however, argues that "Hogg's statement ... is – if it implies extempore composition – too simple." Nonetheless, he suggests that the poem is "(almost certainly) occasional" and that it probably "took final shape for – or after – some 'occasion' [in Edinburgh] in early

December [1786],” before being “applauded into print” in the *Caledonian Mercury* later that month (1968, 3:1221; cf. Crawford 2009, 246). Both Douglas and Chambers, meanwhile, propose that “To a Haggis” was one of two poems that Burns sent to his friend William Chalmers in Ayr on December 27, 1786, a month after the poet’s arrival in Edinburgh. In the accompanying letter, Burns writes that “I enclose you two poems which I have carded and spun since I passed Glenbuck” (quoted in Douglas 1877, 2:41), a reference to the last village in Ayrshire through which Burns passed before entering Lanarkshire en route to Edinburgh (Chambers 1896, 2:30). Although the phrase “carded and spun” possibly implies refinement of existing compositions, internal evidence from the letter proves that one of the enclosures was the “Address to Edinburgh,” which was definitely composed after Burns’s arrival in the city. If “To a Haggis” was indeed the second enclosure, this would suggest that it too assumed its final form, at least, in Edinburgh, not Ayrshire.

As Brown writes, “[i]t is impossible to determine the accuracy or reliability of any of these accounts” of the poem’s composition (1984, 120). As mentioned above, Burns was still reworking the text after it had already been published twice (once in the *Caledonian Mercury* in December 1786, and then in the *Scots Magazine* the following month), and therefore “conceivably [he] could have used the poem or parts of it on all three occasions” described in the etiological narratives (Brown 1984, 120). More importantly, from a folkloristic perspective, all three accounts in combination exemplify three of Brown’s key arguments concerning both Burns’s use of tradition and tradition’s use of Burns. Firstly, they lend support to Brown’s identification of an affinity between

Burns's compositional technique and that of "traditional oral composition" (1984, 5). Thus, for example, they demonstrate the "concern with audience" that Brown finds "characteristic of oral communication," and which prompted Burns to read or recite his compositions aloud to friends and neighbours, or to circulate them in manuscript form, later editing them according to the responses he received (1984, 4). Moreover, the etiological narratives surrounding "To a Haggis" demonstrate how "[m]any of his occasional poems are said to have been off-the-cuff extemporaneous productions," while others were composed mentally and only later set down in writing, so that, as Brown suggests, "[t]he oral sound rather than the written text may well have controlled his composition" (1984, 5). In a similar way, Brown adds that "[m]ultiple versions of some of his works," as certainly exist in the case of "To a Haggis," "may also reflect a concept of artistic product which does not insist on fixity of text; such disregard for a definitive text links Burns to the world of traditional oral composition" (1984, 5).

Secondly, the etiological narratives concerning the circumstances surrounding the composition of "To a Haggis" exemplify the cycle of legendary materials that established itself around the events of Burns's life as a form of "unofficial biography" (Brown 1984, 88), beginning with personal experience narratives such as Richmond's, and branching out into legends and anecdotes, such as the other two accounts discussed above.<sup>10</sup>

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<sup>10</sup> See Brown (1984, 82-116) for a full discussion of the generic evolution of this legendary cycle over time – from personal experience narratives, to legends, to jokes and anecdotes – and its reflection of changing attitudes and perspectives towards Burns. As Brown notes: "Many aspects of the Burns tradition have been anthologised in popular books which pander to the public's desire for little-known facts. Before the rise of contemporary academic scholarship with its concern for research, facts, and subsequent documentation, books quite naturally mixed known with possible or even impossible



Thirdly, and most importantly in the context of the present discussion, the small but significant corpus of legendary traditions surrounding the composition of “To a Haggis” provides what Brown refers to as “a nucleus of proto-elements which later were incorporated into the Burns Suppers: a shared meal, often males only, of haggis, and the recitation of ... ‘To a Haggis’” (1984, 120; cf. Mackay 1985, 12).

The first known gathering held specifically to commemorate Burns’s life and work took place in the summer of 1801, just five years after the poet’s death, and was held in the cottage in Alloway where he was born, which by 1801 was in use as a tavern. An account of this gathering was recorded in manuscript form some years later by one of those present, the Rev. Hamilton Paul (Paul [ca. 1808-9?]; cf. Paul 1819; McNaught 1893; McNaught 1894) (see Figure 4.4). According to Paul, a shared meal of haggis and other symbolically Scottish fare, together with the recitation of Burns’s “To a Haggis,” was a core feature of this first event. Paul writes that a “select party” consisting of nine personal friends and admirers of Burns “proposed to dine in the cottage in which he was born, and to offer a tribute to the memory of departed genius” (Paul [ca. 1808-9?]).<sup>11</sup> After listing the names of those present, he goes on to describe how: “These nine sat down to a comfortable dinner, of which sheep’s head and haggis formed an interesting part— The address to the Haggis was read, and every toast was drank [*sic*] by three

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accounts to make a whole. Thus, nineteenth-century editions and biographies [of Burns] contain a mixture – the documentable evidence as well as the narratives and accounts passed on as true by tradition, their oral and written persistence attesting to their value to the people” (1984, 89).

<sup>11</sup> Paul notes that he had personally never met Burns, but professes himself “an early and enthusiastic admirer of his writings” [ca. 1808-9?].

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Then Surgeon Genl. Barrackmaster, Ayr.  
 David Scott Esq. Banker, Ayr.  
 Thomas Jackson A.M. Rector of the Ayr Academy  
 now Professor of Natural Philosophy in the Uni-  
 versity of St. Andrews.  
 The Rev. Hamilton Paul, Chaplain & Laureat.

These nine sat down to a comfortable din-  
 ner, of which sheep's head and haggis formed  
 an interesting part. The address to the Haggis  
 was read, and every toast was drunk by three  
 times three, i.e. by Nines.

A Portrait of the Poet painted on wood, in-  
 tended as a signpost to the cottage, which  
 is a rural tavern, was presented to the  
 company, to which there is an allusion  
 in the Poem -  
 "When even <sup>his</sup> ~~his~~ image in my burning  
 breast, &c."  
 Before breaking up, the Company mani-

Figure 4.4. Extract from Rev. Hamilton Paul's account of the first ever Burns Supper, held in Alloway in summer 1801, describing how the nine men present "sat down to a comfortable dinner, of which sheep's head and haggis formed an interesting part— The address to the Haggis was read...." (Dean Castle Museum, Ayrshire)

times three." He adds that: "Before breaking up, the Company unanimously resolved that the Anniversary of Burns should be regularly celebrated," and so began the tradition of what was to become known as the Burns Supper. The group met the following year on January 29, which was at that time understood to be the poet's birthday (actually January 25). By then, the numbers in attendance had grown from nine to twenty, and they must have continued to increase in the ensuing years, since Paul notes that despite an extension being built onto Burns's cottage for the express purpose of accommodating them, by 1810 a lack of space obliged them to relocate to the King's Arms inn in nearby Ayr (1819, 296).<sup>12</sup>

The Burns Supper tradition took root and grew rapidly during the first two decades of the nineteenth century; by 1820, several formally constituted Burns Clubs existed in Scotland and the tradition had spread to England, India, North America and Australia (Mackay 2007; cf. Mackay 1985). Brown refers to the format for the event that gradually crystallised during this period as the *core celebration*. She observes that "these early remembrances of Burns recall the Proto-celebration of Burns and his friends over a meal of haggis," while also incorporating new elements, including a central toast to Burns's Immortal Memory, the recitation of poems and songs about the poet, and the singing of Burns's own songs (1984, 122-23). However, although Paul's account

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<sup>12</sup> It does not appear that a formally constituted Burns Club resulted from these early gatherings in Alloway and Ayr, although Paul does refer to the participants collectively as "the Club," and later as "the Alloway Club." Certainly, as Mackay observes, "a club existed if not in name certainly in essence" (1985, 12). These gatherings ceased in 1819, and an official Alloway Burns Club was not convened (or "revived," in Mackay's terms) until 1908 (Mackay 2007).

confirms that a shared meal of haggis and the recitation of Burns's "To a Haggis" were prominent elements in the tradition from the outset, accounts of other Burns Suppers held during this period devote frustratingly little attention to the culinary aspects of these early events. Paul's accounts of the subsequent gatherings he attended in Alloway and Ayr contain no mention of the food or drink that was served, or whether "To a Haggis" was again recited. The reports of these early gatherings printed in the *Glasgow Courier* are similarly silent on this aspect of the proceedings. Matters are not helped by the fact that records of many of the early commemorations that are said to have taken place have not survived.

The dearth of references to the events' culinary aspects during this period can perhaps be attributed to the fact that the participants in these early celebrations, which were usually male-only affairs, were more concerned with the serious business of toasts and poetic tributes to Burns, than with the bill of fare with which they were served. The minute-book of one of the first formally constituted Burns Clubs, founded in the town of Paisley circa 1805, mentions that on January 29, 1807, "a company of nearly a hundred respectable gentlemen assembled in the hall of the Saracen's Head Inn, to celebrate the birth of their favourite Bard." The author adds that "[t]he company sat down to an excellent supper, when the 'Great Chieftain of the Pudding Race' was not forgotten nor unhonoured" (Brown 1893, 61). Unfortunately, however, he does not elaborate as to what exactly this process of "honouring" the haggis entailed. Indeed, it may well be the case that haggis was not such a prominent feature of some of these early events as Brown suggests. John Gibson Lockhart's account of a Burns dinner held in Edinburgh in 1819,

for example, mentions that “[w]e had turbot in perfection [and] a haunch of prime venison,” as well as “filberts and olives at will” to accompany the after-dinner drinks (1977, 30). Tyrrell, Hill, and Kirkby, meanwhile, write that the newspaper reports of the Burns Suppers held by the Ayr and Edinburgh Burns Club in the 1820s and 1830s are “remarkably lacklustre,” making “no reference to national foods, special clothing, room decorations or other items of nationality” (2007, 52). Similarly, Tyrrell notes that “[t]here seems to have been no attempt to provide distinctively Scottish food and drink” at the banquet held as part of the Robert Burns Festival in Ayr in 1844, which he describes as “the first of the great national celebrations that were devised in Burns’s honour” (2005, 58, 44).<sup>13</sup>

By 1859, however, haggis seems to have become firmly established as the centrepiece of the menu at such events. This year was the centenary of Burns’s birth, and marked a new phase within the evolution of the Burns Supper tradition, which Brown refers to as the *elaboration* phase (1984, 128). A total of 872 events held to commemorate the poet’s centenary are recorded in James Ballantine’s *Chronicle of the hundredth birthday of Robert Burns* (1859), including 676 in Scotland and significant numbers in England, Ireland, the colonies and the United States. However, John McVie suggests that as little as five percent of the total number of celebrations held worldwide were documented by Ballantine (quoted in Brown 1984, 124). As Brown writes: “These centenary celebrations, attended by as many as 3000 in New York and over 1000 in

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<sup>13</sup> Tyrrell quotes from an account of the banquet in the London periodical *Punch*, which “referred to ‘a piece of cold tongue, a plate of gooseberries almost ripe, and a pint of some mystery, calling itself Sherry’” (2005, 58).

several Scottish locations, were undoubtedly the culmination of the earlier celebrations and represent a general and widespread public recognition of Burns" (1984, 124). She argues that the centenary celebrations were more inclusive and public than the earlier events, although many remained largely male-dominated affairs. Enduring new elements introduced during this phase include a toast to the ladies, or lassies, and an increasing "equation of Burns with Scotland," as a symbol of national identity (Brown 1984, 128).<sup>14</sup>

Although Brown points out that the large numbers of participants at many of the centenary celebrations made the serving of a meal impractical (1984, 124), a significant proportion of the accounts submitted for inclusion in Ballantine's *Chronicle* make specific mention of the prominent role played by haggis in those events that did incorporate food and drink. A report of a supper held at Drummond's Hotel in Glasgow, for example, describes how "[a]mong more *recherche* viands, the national 'haggis' had the foremost place," adding that "on its 'sonsie face' being presented the countenances of the audience wore the most happy aspect imaginable" (Ballantine 1859, 91). Another report from Glasgow goes so far as to state that in penning "To a Haggis," Burns has "thrown a halo around the haggis which can never grow dim. He has elevated it, indeed, almost to a regal dignity." The same account goes on to describe haggis as "old Scotia's

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<sup>14</sup> As Brown notes, subsequent celebrations in some ways returned to the earlier pattern, becoming "smaller, less public, more homogenous gatherings of devotees of Burns." Unlike the proto- and core celebrations, however, such celebrations typically honoured Burns "as a man" and "as a symbol of Scotland," only secondarily "praising his creative endeavours." She refers to this subsequent phase as the *compression* phase, lasting roughly seventy-five to one hundred years from the date of the centenary in 1859 (1984, 129). The final phase that Brown identifies in the evolution of the Burns Supper tradition takes us up to the 1980s, when her book was published; she refers to this fifth phase as the *stabilisation* period (131).

favourite dish" (84). As these examples suggest, many contributors allude to the dish's increasing status as a culinary symbol of Scottishness, often specifically referring to it as "Scotch haggis." An account of one of the many centenary celebrations held in Edinburgh reports that "[a]mongst other dainties" served at the event "was the haggis, a dish that is every Scotchman's brag" (38). Another account refers to the dish as "homely Scottish fare," which is clearly a romanticisation of its rustic, peasant status, in the face of its increasing construction as a festival food and as a national symbol.

Several of the chroniclers mention the fact that a recitation of "To a Haggis" had featured as part of their groups' events. Mr. George Mather, for example, is said to have recited the poem "in an animated manner" at the University of Glasgow students' banquet (88-89). A supper held in the village of Balbeggie, meanwhile, included "the indispensable Scotch haggis, in the cutting up of which the croupier, amid loud cheering, addressed to it the humorous apostrophe—'Fair fa' your honest, sonsie face,/ Great chieftain o' the pudding race,' &c" (172). At Busby, "the Chairman gravely recited, amidst roars of laughter, Burns' 'Address to a Haggis'" (196), while Mr. Weir's rendition of the poem at an event in Falkirk "would have satisfied Burns himself, and satisfied the audience so much that he had to repeat it" (247). Other accounts allude to toasting or otherwise honouring the haggis. A report from a "public soiree" in the town of Ardrossan in Ayrshire, for example, describes how "[i]n the course of the evening, a 'reeking Scotch haggis' was brought in, and the great chieftain of the pudding race was hailed with three times three" (166). The author adds that the dish's appearance

"occasioned considerable merriment," an observation also made in several other accounts.

There are occasional references in Ballantine's *Chronicle* to the haggis having been "brought in" or "carried in" at a particular moment during the proceedings, sometimes greeted by "cheers" or "merriment." However, there is no mention in any of the 1859 accounts of the ceremonial piping in of the dish that is such a central feature of most present-day public or institutional (as opposed to domestic) Burns Suppers. Given the emphasis placed on this custom by subsequent commentators as a highlight of any event at which it featured, it seems unlikely that it would not have been deemed worthy of mention in any of these accounts, had it actually taken place. It is therefore reasonable to posit that the custom of piping in the haggis did not yet form a component of the Burns Supper tradition in the poet's centenary year. In fact, the earliest known description of a haggis being ceremonially piped in as part of a public celebration of Scottishness comes not from a Burns Supper, but from a St. Andrew's dinner, an event held to honour Scotland's patron saint. Moreover, this account refers to a celebration that took place, not in Scotland, but in Canada. It appears in the book *Americans at home*, by the Scottish writer David Macrae, which consists of a series of sketches based on observations made during Macrae's travels in North America in 1867 and 1868 (Macrae 1870, 1:[x]), less than a decade after Burns's centenary. In a sketch entitled "Canadian winter," Macrae describes his experiences as a guest at the Scottish celebrations in Montreal on St. Andrew's Day, November 30, 1868, where he was much impressed by the scale of the events held to mark the occasion and by the enthusiasm of the participants (2:339). As he



writes: "nobody knows what Scottish fervour is till he sees Scotchmen celebrating a national festival two or three hundred miles away from home" (2:339-40). The Caledonian and St. Andrew's Societies of Montreal, "with a patriotism that disregarded the thermometer," had organised a procession through the frosty streets "with colours flying," led by five kilted pipers. The procession ended at a "Scotch [i.e., Presbyterian] church" where the minister proclaimed "the praises of Scotland" (2:340). The evening events included the Caledonian public meeting, "crowded to the door with ardent patriots," and the St. Andrew's dinner. Of the food that was served at the latter event, Macrae writes:

I cannot trust myself now to conjecture how many dishes were at that national dinner. I know there was "plenty much to eat" (as the Yankees say), and a great deal too much to drink; but I remember that the great event of the evening was the introduction of the immortal haggis. The entry of Garibaldi into London, or John Bright landing at New York, might give one an idea of it. With pipers blowing in front, with pipers bringing up the rear, in came the "king o' pudding race," borne aloft by the excited waiter, amidst the deafening cheers of the assembled patriots, who stood watching and cheering it as it moved round the room, till they saw it deposited triumphantly in front of the chairman. It may be safely asserted that no Scotchman in America ever thinks of tasting haggis at any other time; but any one failing to show due honour to that mighty symbol of Scottish nationality at the St. Andrew's dinner, would be branded as a renegade and apostate from the national faith. (2:340-41)

From this it appears that the custom of piping in the haggis was an established and highly anticipated feature of the Montreal St. Andrew's dinner by 1868, when Macrae paid his visit to the city, although further research is needed in order to ascertain precisely when the practice began.

The possibility that the custom originated among the Scottish diaspora, either in North America or elsewhere, is supported by the fact that all of the early accounts of it

that I have located to date come from locations other than Scotland. The next available description, for example, refers to the annual dinner of the St. Andrew's Society of the State of New York, which took place at Delmonico's restaurant in New York City on November 30, 1878. According to the report of this event in the *New York Times*: "The 'haggis' was received with royal honors last evening. As the huge platters containing it were brought in by a long file of waiters, preceded by the shrieking bag-pipes, the 200 'brawny Scots' rose to their feet and greeted their national dish with rousing cheers" (Oaten cakes and bagpipes 1878). From here on in, references to the custom as practised among diaspora communities, in the context of both St. Andrew's dinners and Burns Suppers, occur with increasing regularity. Numerous references to the custom have been located both from North America and New Zealand during the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, and further research promises to uncover many more in these and other locations. The earliest reference I have located to date from New Zealand comes from an account of the annual St. Andrew's dinner held by the Canterbury Caledonian Society in November 1884, at which "the haggis, the dish of the evening, ... was ushered in by the piper" (Scottish bill of fare 1884, 4). Among the most remarkable accounts from this early period are reports of haggises having been brought in "enveloped in flames" at St. Andrew's Night celebrations in Montreal in the 1880s and 1890s, and of an event in Wellington, New Zealand, at which the haggis made its entrance in darkness "surmounted by an electrically-illuminated St. Andrew's cross" during the 1930s (Hail to St. Andrew 1891; Caledonian evening 1930, 13).

It is perhaps hardly surprising that the custom may thus have originated among the diaspora rather than within Scotland itself. It has become a truism that, as the editor of the *Glasgow Citizen* remarked in 1859, "the Scotch abroad [are] more intensely Scotch than even their countrymen at home" (quoted in Tyrrell, Hill, and Kirkby 2007, 57). Tyrrell, Hill, and Kirkby suggest that whereas Scottish newspaper accounts of Burns Suppers during the mid 1800s made little mention of haggis or other symbolically Scottish foods, apparently not considering them worthy of special notice, local newspapers in Australia during the same period devoted considerable attention to the cuisine served at the feasts held by expatriate Scots (2007, 56, 57). Similarly, they argue that as late as 1859, reports of Burns celebrations in Scotland "make it evident that a distinctive pattern had still to be 'set' in a way that would be recognisable to modern eyes; it was almost as if there was no need for prescribed rituals at this stage in the evolution of the Burns cult in Scotland" (2007, 53). In contrast, public celebrations of Scottishness held in Australia and in India during the same period were becoming increasingly formularised (cf. Buettner 2002). In a similar way, Buettner argues that "the important role played by Scots living outside Scotland in developing the tradition of publicly honouring the nation's patron saint cannot be too strongly emphasised" (2002, 221).

The earliest reference I have found to the custom taking place in the United Kingdom is from the Halloween dinner of the London Scottish Volunteers in 1891. A report of this event in the London *Graphic* states that:

The eating of the famous haggis ... is almost always celebrated at those annual social feasts where Scot meets brother Scot in patriotic fashion. ....

On these occasions ... its entrance into the room is sufficiently imposing; borne at arms length above the cooks' heads, and preceded by a strutting piper, in full blast, its appearance is hailed with an excess of enthusiasm that must astonish the Southron, who may only know the Scot in his cannier moments. (Scotch dinner.... 1891, 505)

Accompanying this report is the earliest known visual depiction of the custom (see Figure 4.5). An early photograph of a haggis being piped in, from an unspecified "Caledonian banquet" in London in the 1920s, was published in St. John Adcock's *Wonderful London* ([1926], 668; see Figure 4.6). Another early visual depiction of the custom appears in an advertisement for the Burns anniversary celebrations hosted by Patrick Thomson's department store in Edinburgh in January 1936 (see Figure 4.7). In 1924, meanwhile, "piping in the haggis" featured as part of the "Old Time Customs" advertising campaign for John Begg Scotch whisky, which ran in such newspapers as the *Daily Sketch* (see Figure 4.8). As this example indicates particularly clearly, only around sixty years since accounts of the custom began to appear, piping in the haggis had undergone a process of folklorisation, thereby setting the scene for the debates that emerged a few years later concerning its authenticity.

In order fully to understand these debates it is necessary to situate them within the broader context of the criticisms that have been levelled against participants in the Burns cult almost since its inception. Almost as soon as the first Burns Clubs had been established, a critical tradition deriding the sentimental excesses of their alleged hero-worship also began to develop. Such critiques often drew comparisons with religious manias or cults. The analogy is not unfounded; Tyrrell characterises the early development of Scotland's "obsession with Robert Burns" thus:



THE HALLOWE'EN DINNER OF THE LONDON SCOTTISH VOLUNTEERS—BRINGING IN THE HAGGIS  
DRAWN BY LOCKHART BOGLE

Figure 4.5. "Bringing in the haggis" at the Halloween dinner of the London Scottish Volunteers, October 1891, perhaps the earliest known visual depiction of the custom (illustration by Lockhart Bogle, from the *London Graphic*)




Figure 4.6. Photograph of a haggis being piped in at a public celebration of Scottishness in London, from St. John Adcock's *Wonderful London* (1926)


# BURNS DAY

## CELEBRATION

SATURDAY, 25th JANUARY 1936



"Ye pou'es wha mak' mankind yer care,  
an' dish them out their bill o' fare;  
Auld Scotland wants nae skinning ware  
That jaups in luggies;  
But, if ye wish her grateful prayer,  
GIE HER A HAGGIS!" Burns



**COME tae P.T.'S for a REAL SCOTCH DENNER**  
 Scotch Kail, Scotch Haggis, an' a' that;  
 DRAP IN an' see **THE MARCH O' THE HAGGIS LED BY**  
**THE PIPER**—and there's a Braw Caird tae be gi'en awa' as a  
 keepsake on Saturday the 25th.

**PATRICK THOMSON**

Figure 4.7. Advertisement for a Burns Day Celebration at "P.T.'s" (Patrick Thomson Ltd.) department store in Edinburgh in January 1936, featuring "the March o' the Haggis led by the piper" (The Scotsman Publications Ltd.)

**OLD · TIME · CUSTOMS ·**



*"Piping in the Haggis."* At all Burns' Dinners (usually held on 25th January), the Haggis is brought in with musical honours, the dish having been immortalised by the poet in the following lines:—

*"Fair fa' your honest, senate face  
Great chieftain o' the puddle race,  
About them il' ye tak' yer place  
punch, tripe or thae o's.  
Weel are ye worthy o' a grace  
as lang's nae' airm."*

It's a wise old custom to

*— take a peg of*  
**John Begg!**

The Scotch Whisky  
that has been supplied to all  
the Royal Palaces for 75 years.

  
By Appointment  
since 1848.

JOHN BEGG LTD., 106, Fenchurch St., London, E.C.3; 64, Waterloo St., Glasgow.

Figure 4.8. Piping in the haggis as an "Old Time Custom": advertisement for John Begg Scotch whisky, published in the *Daily Sketch* (1924)



Beginning early in the nineteenth century when Burns Clubs were founded, biographies written and monuments built, the obsession strengthened during the 1840s.... Something like a religious cult emerged with large numbers of visitors using the new railways and steamships to go on what were sometimes called "pilgrimages" to the places with which the poet's memory was associated. (2005, 42)

The religious analogy is evident in the title of what is perhaps the earliest anti-Burns cult critique, a pamphlet produced in 1811 by the Rev. William Peebles, who had been mentioned in several of Burns's satires (Peebles 1811; cf. Low 1974, 249-51). The pamphlet was entitled *Burnomania: The celebrity of Robert Burns considered*. It includes a verse in which Peebles decries the newly established ritual of the Burns Supper:

[....] from age to age,  
As for a monarch, hero, sage,  
Let anniversaries repeat  
His glories, celebrate a fete  
Imbibe his spirit, sing his songs,  
Extol his name, lament his wrongs,  
His death deplore, accuse his fate,  
And raise him far above the great.  
What call you this? Is it insania?  
I'll coin a word, 'tis Burnomania.  
(Peebles 1811, n. pag.)

Others have referred to such hero-worship as "bardolatry," and those who participate in it are labelled as "Burnsians." Perhaps the most virulent critiques of the cult of Burns were produced by the poets Hugh MacDiarmid and Edwin Muir, both leading lights in the Scottish literary renaissance of the interwar years. MacDiarmid excoriated the sentimental excesses of the Burns cult in a series of articles published during the 1920s and 1930s, and in his famous poem *A drunk man looks at the thistle* (1926). Gerard Carruthers, meanwhile, notes that "Edwin Muir once slyly remarked that Burns was a

deviant Christ figure for Scotland,” explaining that “[w]ith Burns notoriously carrying a burden of sin, and writing with relish about it, he provided vicarious excitement for a douce, fearful Presbyterian nation.” Carruthers goes on to suggest that “[w]e might take this joke on the idolatry of the poet a stage further and suggest that for Scotland, Burns is the flesh made word” (2009). It is thus not surprising that several commentators have noted the parallel between the ritual that has developed around the haggis in the context of the Burns Supper and the Holy Communion service, as discussed in Chapter 3, with the haggis standing in as the “symbolic cadaver” (Smith 1955, 20).

Writing in 1982, meanwhile, Elizabeth Duthie and Alan Bower observe that much recent Burns scholarship has been devoted to “pursu[ing] ... MacDiarmid’s wish that Burns’s image should be rescued from worshippers at his tartan-and-haggis-decorated cargo-cult shrine and placed ‘in his proper historical setting – to see him as he really is’” (Duthie and Bower 1982, 261). Here we see not only a continuation of the religious analogy, but also an explicit statement of the desire to deconstruct the myths represented by the “tartan-and-haggis image” in order to arrive at a more genuine sense of cultural identity. In this context, it is the Burns cult that is characterised as perpetuating a false and trivialising “myth” that obscures the poet’s true significance, again drawing on the dichotomised language of authenticity versus fakery. Even Alan Riach, who elsewhere critiques the Scotch Myths school of cultural analysis, refuses to acknowledge that the Burns cult might be worth studying in its own right, commenting dismissively that “the Burns cult is still the fiasco that it was when MacDiarmid decried it in 1928” (1997, 213).

The only consolation, he adds, is that the cult may now “be known for what it is” – presumably by stripping away the “myths” to reveal the emptiness at its core.

In particular, both Burns's “To a Haggis” itself, and the ceremony that forms its primary performance context as part of the wider celebration of the Burns Supper, have typically polarised opinion among scholars and other commentators, and have become inextricably entangled in the debate surrounding the cultural legitimacy of the Burns cult. The eminent Burns scholar Robert Crawford, in his recent biography of the poet, argues that “To a Haggis” is “[t]he best new poem” that Burns wrote between the publication of the first, Kilmarnock edition of his collected works in 1786 and the appearance of the second, Edinburgh edition in 1787 (2009, 246). This is high praise, given that the Edinburgh edition is over a hundred pages longer than its predecessor. At the opposite end of the spectrum, John Cairney's *Burns companion*, in an unfortunate mixing of culinary metaphors, describes “To a Haggis” as an “inconsequential trifle, given by many Burnsians a much overrated place in the Burns canon” (2001, 134). Several commentators stress that Burns did not intend the poem to be taken seriously. This may well be the case, although, as John Corbett points out in his careful lexical analysis of the poem, the linguistic evidence lends itself equally to a reading of the work as ironic or as “encouraging a revision of attitudes” towards haggis, or both. Indeed, the “mismatch” between the poetic genre of the address and the unexpected subject matter and familiar tone of the poem tends to support the possibility that Burns is purposely “leaving open a dual interpretation” (Corbett 1997, 67-68). Despite this, Cairney, for example,

pronounces that the poem "was never intended as anything more than a humorous [*sic*] extravaganza of a moment at table" (2001, 134).

Some commentators add to this the assertion that participants in the Burns cult, in taking the work too seriously, mistake the poet's intentions and the poem's true meaning. Kenneth Simpson, for example, writes that "[d]evotees of the myth may not welcome the suggestion that Burns's tongue might be in his cheek in 'To a Haggis'" (1994, xix). Similarly, Edward Cowan argues that the humour of the work has been "lost over time, resulting in a situation encountered at Burns suppers today, on both sides of the Atlantic, when Burns' 'Address to the Haggis' is often declaimed as if it were a mournful psalm, so ignoring the playful intention of the poet" (1999, 64). Cairney goes on to offer the following derisory, and historically inaccurate, summation of the haggis ceremony in the context of the "questionable rite" of the Burns Supper:

since the Burns Federation set the Burns Suppers in train at the end of the 19th-century [*sic*], it [i.e., the recitation of "To a Haggis"] has been set in stone as a mandatory part of that questionable rite all over the world, and is delivered in a stentorian bellow every 25 January by a perspiring gentleman in a kilt to a generally uncomprehending audience and with the accompaniment of a slightly bemused chef, bagpipes, pipes [*sic*], claymores and the inevitable tray of drams. (2001, 134)

The allegation that the poem and the accompanying ceremony are taken overly seriously by the largely "uncomprehending" participants in the Burns Supper tradition is a gross over-generalisation, as the considerable corpus of humorous folk parodies of "To a Haggis" attest. Humorous folk commentaries on the custom similarly suggest the limitations of Cairney's argument. To quote just one example, at a Burns Supper hosted by the Leeds Caledonian Society in 1939 "[a]n original and amusing explanation of the

ritual [of piping in the haggis] was given by Colonel A. D. Sharp," the Society's president, who noted that:

The piper comes in front... This, so some people say, gives [the ritual] poetry and dignity. Nothing of the sort. It would be impossible. It is to warn all concerned that they eat haggis at their own risk. ... You will notice we follow it up with a little whisky. The reason is that we know that, in spite of the warning, there will be a number of inquisitive people who will taste it to see what it is like, so we take the precaution of giving it a corrective. (Haggis ritual.... 1939, 9)

Such parodies and comic meta-folkloric commentaries could not exist if their creators, performers and audiences were slavish, unconscious adherents to a hegemonic, inflexible tradition, since folk parody and other humorous forms of meta-folklore have as their basis a reflexive awareness of traditional models and a playful delight in creatively subverting them (see, e.g., Narváez 1977). As the above examples suggest, implicit in many critiques of the Burns cult is the assumption that all Burns Suppers are essentially homogenous, despite a serious lack of case studies examining specific events in specific contexts. We may compare, for example, Cowan's characterisation of the typical recitation of "To a Haggis" as "a mournful psalm" with my own analysis of the poem as recited at the 2007 Newfoundland St. Andrew's Society Burns Supper, which highlights the eminently playful nature of the performance (Fraser 2008). Both Cowan's and Cairney's assessments are also difficult to reconcile with the reports of the considerable "merriment" that often accompanied the piping in and addressing of the haggis at nineteenth-century Burns Suppers both in Scotland and abroad.

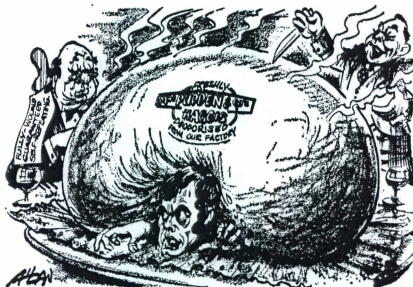
Like the critiques of the Burns cult in general, debates concerning the authenticity of the custom of piping in the haggis are nothing new, but can be traced back at least as

far as the 1930s, at which time the custom must have been fairly recently established in Scotland. In January 1930 a debate took place in the pages of the *Scotsman* newspaper concerning the "propriety" of "the *increasing* custom of making a ceremony of bringing in the haggis at Burns and other Scottish assemblies" (emphasis added). A reporter for the newspaper summarises the issues as follows:

It has been suggested that this custom is overdone, is undignified, and has no traditional sanction. It may be felt by Scotsmen who are inclined to be sensitive that the parading of the haggis is a playing-up to the common conception of the comic Scotsman. As a picturesque item it lacks something; as possibly having a humorous touch, it is open to the objection which applies to twice-told jokes; and it suggests an adulation of food – and a kind of food which is by no means relished by every Scotsman – which exhibits the Scottish spirit in a somewhat gross and unjustifiable manner. (Piping in the haggis: Propriety questioned.... 1930, 7)

A similar assessment of the custom as "a playing-up to the common conception of the comic Scotsman" is presented in an article by Allan Tooley published in the *Aberdeen Press and Journal* in January 1969. Headlined "Will the real Robert Burns please stand up? and be counted before the myth destroys the man," the article argues that "Burns is still very much a living force and not a mummified memory embedded in haggis." It is accompanied by a cartoon featuring Burns trapped under the weight of a giant, factory-produced haggis, which is about to be stabbed by a cheerful man in a kilt (see Figure 4.9).

Of the custom of ceremonially piping in the haggis, Tooley suggests that it would be more appropriate as a means of paying homage to Sir Harry Lauder, Scotland's best-known music-hall performer of the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, whose portrayal of the stereotypical "comic Scotsman" has been subject to particular criticism



**BURNS IS STILL VERY MUCH A LIVING FORCE AND  
NOT A MUMMIFIED MEMORY EMBEDDED IN HAGGIS**

Figure 4.9. Illustration accompanying Allan Tooley's article "Will the real Robert Burns please stand up?" (1969), showing Burns being crushed under the weight of a giant, factory-produced haggis (*Aberdeen Press and Journal*)

by proponents of the Scotch Myths school. Describing the custom as “pantomimic,”

Tooley writes that:

Burns Supper devotes [*sic*] may be convinced that the ritual cannot possibly do any harm. If so, I must disagree. Apart from perpetuating a boring rite which deceives them into believing that fitting homage is being paid to Scotland's supreme poet, they are helping to bolster up a false image of this most remarkable man. The formula for a Burns Supper could serve equally well to keep alive the memory of Sir Harry Lauder.

Sir Harry, as far as I'm concerned, is welcome to his particular niche in the Hall of Fame. I merely want to emphasise that Robert Burns' status should not be confused with that of a music-hall comedian. Yet this is exactly what the timeworn ceremony of piping in the haggis – not to mention the subsequent “Address” – seems to me to amount to.

It would be just as relevant to the occasion – if a little more amusing – to carry in, held proudly aloft and piping hot, Sir Harry's curly walking-stick. (Tooley 1969, 6)

Adam Balic similarly uses the example of a haggis ceremony that he experienced in New Zealand to epitomise the artificiality of the process whereby consuming the dish has been reduced to “an act of Scottish masochistic bravado and shallow cultural identity.” He describes how:

The worse [*sic*] example I have seen of this was during a convention dinner at a Scottish themed New Zealand city, where the “haggis” was piped in with great pomp, The Poem [was] read and the dirk stuck in, but no haggis was offered for consumption. It later transpired that there was none to offer, as the “haggis” was actually a prop of sponge rubber filled with water and microwaved to produce a steaming effect. (2007)

Brown, meanwhile, writes that the custom of piping in the haggis is spurned by purists as “an English innovation” (1984, 132).

Returning to the debate in the pages of the *Scotsman* in January 1930, however, we see that opinions on the custom were divided, even then. The reporter had polled a number of prominent Scotsmen associated in some way with Burns or with Scottish



culture in general, to solicit their views on the topic. Sir Joseph Dobbie, the President of the Burns Federation, for example, considered it "[n]ot at all suitable or required," and "a most artificial way of adding to the gaiety of the evening" (*Piping in the haggis: Propriety questioned....* 1930, 7). Professor W. J. Watson, Chair of Celtic Languages, Literature, History and Antiquities at the University of Edinburgh, similarly stated that "I always feel inclined to think it is a little absurd" (*Piping in the haggis: Propriety questioned....* 1930, 7). However, he expressed a more open-minded attitude towards the concept of tradition as an ongoing process of invention, going on to argue that "I don't think, as a tradition, that it is old, but we can make traditions of our own if we think proper." Lord Sands offered a similarly nuanced understanding of the development of traditions, suggesting that:

There are a number of things specially associated with Scotland, and regarded as national, which are really of local origin, ... such, for example, as the kilt and the pipes themselves. There are other matters, certain customs and observances, which are supposed by many to be a legacy from remote antiquity, and always to have been associated with Scottish celebrations, which are really of comparatively modern origin.

In such cases, he added:

I am not disposed to be either pedantic or priggish in regard to the matter and to question the propriety of adhering to what has now established itself. Accordingly, it would not have occurred to me to find fault with the piping in of the haggis, even although I had been convinced that the custom was not of very ancient origin and had been originated in some particular part of the country.

Lord Sands concluded with a practical observation, noting that "I am afraid that a good many expectants at a Burns dinner would now be disappointed if the custom were foregone." Dr. Alexander Darling, the President of the Edinburgh Burns Club,

meanwhile, felt that the propriety of the custom was dependent on the context and manner in which it was performed, but stated that, if tastefully presented, "I do not think that [it] is undignified." Indeed, he suggested that "[p]iping in the haggis is a custom essentially Scottish. The Burns anniversary comes only once a year, and I think that the ceremony which has been criticised is harmless, and has in it no inherent vulgarity" (Piping in the haggis: Propriety questioned.... 1930, 7).

A similarly wide spectrum of opinions on the custom was expressed by readers who wrote to the editor of the *Scotsman* in the days following the publication of the initial article to offer their own contributions to the debate. F. T. MacLeod, for example, wrote that "[t]he piping in of the haggis at Burns club dinners has always appeared to me highly inappropriate," arguing that the pipes ought to be used "to honour [Highland] chiefs and distinguished guests, and not to glorify a Lowland pudding" (MacLeod 1930, 7). Thomas Innes of Learney, however, contended that "[f]ar from being 'comic,' the custom is a survival of [the] great ceremonial" that took place in the context of medieval banquets, at which the various courses were formally ushered into the banquet hall with a musical accompaniment (Innes 1930, 7). A follow-up article published in the paper on January 23 reported that at a Burns Supper in Selkirk the previous evening, one of the speakers had responded with amusement to the debate, but had emphasised the importance of maintaining traditions such as piping in the haggis as significant cultural expressions of Scottishness. As he stated: "By dropping such customs [Scots] were just tending towards losing another Scottish tradition which helped to keep Scotsmen to the

fore as an independent and liberty-loving people" (Piping in the haggis: Reply to critics.... 1930, 11).

## Conclusion

The vitality of the ongoing debate surrounding the role of haggis in the context of the Burns Supper and other public celebrations of Scottishness exemplifies the way in which the corpus of expressive cultural traditions surrounding the dish provides a forum for creative contestations of Scottishness among Scots themselves. Rather than simply deploring the perceived inauthenticity of such "invented traditions," or treating them as "myths" to be deconstructed and dispelled, there is a pressing need for scholars to undertake critical analyses of both the history and development of the traditions themselves, and the subsequent debates surrounding their authenticity, examining their ideological underpinnings and the wider cultural context within which these debates took shape and continue to evolve. As Pittock writes of material culture in Scotland, understanding such cultural representation of Scottishness "is not a simple matter of polarities, authenticity/myth, actuality/invention: the complex context in which material culture itself operates renders such either/or models inoperable" (2007, 65). A similar point can be made about the customary and verbal representations of Scottishness explored in this chapter, and indeed throughout this thesis. In contrast to the theories promulgated by the Scotch Myths school, folk and popular usages of such symbols are characterised by a considerable degree of ambivalence, multivocality and creative

flexibility in representing and contesting Scottishness. There is a need to examine more fully the complexities of such creative uses of haggis and other contested symbols of identity among Scots themselves. Thus, rather than relying on a model based on a dichotomy between the authentic and the fake, I argue that in approaching such materials, we ought to adopt the model suggested in Chapter 1, of the haggis as a collection of cultural texts about Scottishness: a mixture or amalgam constantly generative of new and often competing meanings and perspectives.

## Chapter 5. Conclusion: "A taste of Scotland"?

Throughout this thesis, I have focused on the way in which expressive cultural traditions and discourses about haggis encode multiple and often competing representations of Scottishness, as expressed from both esoteric (Scottish) and exoteric (English) perspectives. I began by introducing the notion of the haggis as a mixture or amalgam, and specifically as a collection of diverse cultural texts about Scottishness. As the genre of the "literary haggis" discussed in Chapter 1 illustrates, this notion has a considerable history within Scottish cultural discourse, and provides a useful model for the overall approach adopted in this thesis. This model stands in stark contrast to the dichotomy constructed by proponents of the Scotch Myths school as a means of classifying cultural representations of Scottishness as either authentic or fake (see Chapter 4). The complex interrelationships and incongruities that exist among the diverse texts of our cultural haggis mean that it is continually generating new perspectives, and resists incorporation within any single hegemonic interpretive framework. The expressive cultural traditions surrounding the dish – both esoteric and exoteric – have always revolved around a conceptualisation of haggis as a challenge to taste that demands a visceral response. Accordingly, in Chapter 1, I suggested that Caroline McCracken-Flesher's concept of tartan as "the site of the contention that is Scotland" (2002, 113) can also be applied to the expressive cultural materials about haggis. By providing a forum within which multiple and often competing cultural

representations are brought into contact, haggis acts as a particularly complex, multivalent and powerful symbol of Scottishness.

The present study makes several key contributions to the literature on Scottish national identity and its cultural representations. Perhaps most notably, it presents a new perspective on the iconography of tartanry, and demonstrates the unique contribution that the folklorist has to offer to the growing body of work critiquing the anti-tartan polemic of the Scotch Myths school, as outlined in Chapter 4. It also serves as a corrective to the tendency of the Scotch Myths scholars to ignore or oversimplify both the complex processes by which the constituent symbols of tartanry came to be incorporated into that discourse, and the complex discursive uses to which those symbols have been put in representing and contesting Scottishness. Although a new wave of scholars has begun to reassess the established approaches to tartanry with respect to the cultural history of tartan itself (see esp. Brown 2010), the present study represents a first response to the need for case studies undertaking similar re-evaluations of the other constituent elements of the iconography of tartanry.

The materials presented in Chapter 2, for example, demonstrate that the construction of haggis as a symbol of Scottish culinary identity in the wake of Burns's "To a Haggis" and the subsequent tradition of the Burns Supper did not take place in a cultural vacuum. Rather, it must be interpreted in the wider context of the dish's role as one of a number of culinary stereotypes of Scottishness that emerged with English cultural discourse during the 1700s, as part of the wider stereotype of the "beggarly Scot." Thus, as Gerald Porter suggests of tartan, rather than a "clumsy assertion of

nationalism," the reappropriation of such symbols by the Scots themselves can more accurately be read as attempts to resist a pre-existing exoteric stereotype (Porter 2001, 121). The discussion presented in Chapter 3, meanwhile, represents the first extended textual analysis and interpretation of a sample of expressive cultural materials about haggis from both esoteric and exoteric perspectives, applying McCracken-Flesher's notion of the Scottish body politic as grotesque (1995/96) to illustrate how these materials encode competing conceptualisation of Scottishness on the part of both in- and outsiders. Lastly, the materials presented in Chapter 4 offer new insights into the central role played by haggis in contesting the authenticity and cultural legitimacy of tartanry within Scottish folk and popular discourse, and in particular in the context of the debates surrounding the authenticity of the Burns Supper and other public celebrations of Scottishness.

A considerable amount of work remains to be done on this topic. Any one of the expressive cultural traditions discussed here provides scope for an extensive study in its own right. In terms of the materials explored in Chapter 2, for example, a study could be undertaken into the emergence of the dish as distinctively Scottish within the published cookbooks of the 1700s, both in England and in Scotland itself. It would also be valuable to trace the culinary evolution of the dish within such sources over time, as those recipes that appear in cookery manuscripts and published cookbooks prior to 1800 differ considerably from the haggis that is known in Scotland today (cf. Hieatt and Nutter 2006, 48; Livingston 1958/59; Balic 2007). In the Scottish cookbooks of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, it should also be possible to trace the gradual construction of the dish

as a culinary symbol of Scottishness. In his survey of cookbooks published by the Scottish Women's Rural Institutes from 1925 onwards, for example, Alexander Fenton identifies a distinction between dishes that were regarded as "everyday" and those that were framed as "traditional." He notes that the movement of particular types of dish from the former to the latter category "seems to mark a general change of attitude to dishes that had come to be regarded as 'old-style'" (2007, 386). Fenton's brief survey suggests the possibilities for research tracing similar patterns in the evolving presentation of haggis as Scotland's "national dish" in the context of nineteenth- and twentieth-century Scottish cookbooks more generally.

A further area that deserves to be explored in depth is the commodification of the dish from the nineteenth century onwards by commercial haggis manufacturers, Scotland's developing tourism industry, and others. Commercial haggis manufacturers during this period often drew on the dish's association with Burns, and its increasing reputation as Scotland's "national dish," as a means of marketing their products, and many continue to do so to this day. Meanwhile, in contrast to the often horrified reactions to haggis and other distinctively Scottish dishes expressed by the narrators of the early travelogues discussed in Chapter 3, by the mid 1800s contemporary sources indicate that tasting haggis was increasingly presented as an essential component in the itinerary of the typical tourist to Scotland (e.g., Smith 1865, 1:24), eventually leading to the commodification of the dish as "a taste of Scotland" by the country's tourism industry. On the one hand, then, haggis manufacturers have used its associations with Scottishness to sell the dish, while, on the other hand, the tourism industry has used the



dish to sell Scotland. Haggis has also been used to sell a wide variety of other products, such as John Begg Scotch whisky (see Figure 4.8, above). A study of the techniques used to commodify haggis as a symbol of Scottishness in these contexts promises to shed new light on the processes underlying its incorporation into the iconography of tartanry that has since become so hotly contested among Scots themselves.

The tall tale tradition that depicts the haggis as a legendary creature native to the Scottish Highlands is another aspect of the overall corpus of expressive cultural materials surrounding the dish that I have been able to touch on only briefly here (see Chapter 3). Perhaps more than any other aspect of this corpus, stories about the legendary haggis creature have typically been dismissed by commentators as part of the “ridicule and endless bad jokes” surrounding the dish (Wright 1996, 7). As I have argued elsewhere, however, despite the apparent frivolity of such narratives, at a deeper level they can be interpreted as playful meta-commentaries on the symbolic iconography of tartanry, which are arguably more subtle and knowing than the anti-tartan tirades of the Scotch Myths school as discussed in Chapter 4 (see Fraser 2003). In particular, more work needs to be done on the emergence of the tall tale about the haggis creature in the popular culture of both England and Scotland during the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. Commentators often refer, for example, to the existence of countless music-hall jokes about haggis, but to the best of my knowledge no research has yet been undertaken into the role and prominence of references to the dish in this context. If the tall tale tradition emerged sometime during the late 1800s (Fraser 2010), then music hall and other forms

of popular entertainment in Scotland during this period would be a suitable starting-point to look for evidence of it.

A further project that promises to produce fruitful results in relation to the tall tale tradition would be to conduct interviews with individuals born and brought up in Scotland, in order to achieve a fuller understanding of the interrelationships between the popular cultural manifestations of the tall tale and its existence within oral tradition (cf. Fraser 2003). All of the areas for future research identified here promise to uncover new insights into the complex processes underlying the emergence and evolution of haggis as a culinary symbol and stereotype, and the many discursive uses to which it has been put in representing and contesting Scottishness, by both in- and outsiders. In undertaking these and other projects, folklorists have the potential to make many important contributions to the new wave of scholarship on Scottish identity and its cultural representations.

Almost a hundred and fifty years ago John Hill Burton announced that “[t]here is something transcendently Scotch about a haggis” (1864, 1:323). Since that time, countless postcards, tourist brochures, souvenir tea-towels and the like promise visitors to the country the opportunity to experience “a taste of Scotland” by consuming the dish (see Figure 5.1). Indeed, haggis has often been used to symbolise aspects of the “Scottish character” (Hazell 1986, [1]), as the culinary embodiment of an essentialised conceptualisation of Scottishness. In an oft-quoted passage from her book *The Scots kitchen* (first published in 1929), for example, F. Marian McNeill writes that “the choice of haggis as the supreme national dish of Scotland is very fitting,” explaining that:

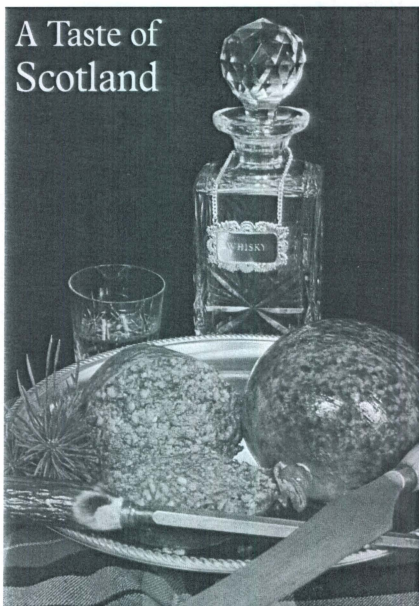


Figure 5.1. Postcard depicting haggis as “A Taste of Scotland” (n.d.) (Whiteholme of Dundee)

It is testimony to the national gift of making the most of small means; for in the haggis we have concocted from humble, even despised ingredients a veritable *plat de gourmets*. ... The savoury and wholesome blending of the cereal with onion and suet ... is typically Scottish. Further, it is a thoroughly democratic dish, equally available and equally honoured in castle, farm and croft. Finally, the use of the paunch of the animal as the receptacle of the ingredients gives that touch of romantic barbarism so dear to the Scottish heart. (McNeill 1976, 172)

This passage effects a complex intertwining of haggis and Scottishness, whereby character traits identified as inherently and distinctively Scottish – from frugality to egalitarianism to noble savagery – are projected onto the haggis, while, conversely, the “savoury and wholesome” qualities of the dish itself are transferred onto the Scots who feed on such fare.

The irony, of course, and the overall argument of this thesis, is that there is nothing intrinsically or transcendently Scottish about haggis. After all, essentially similar dishes are made in many cultures around the world, and have been since long before haggis was ever identified as a distinctively Scottish dish. Thus, despite a pervading discourse that works to naturalise the dish's relationship with Scottishness, this association is fundamentally a product of culture, not nature. The association is a powerful one, however, since few foods have inspired such a large and varied corpus of expressive cultural materials as haggis. This thesis has explored several key strands within this corpus, from its emergence as a culinary stereotype of Scottishness within English cultural discourse during the mid to late 1700s, to debates about its authenticity as a symbol of Scottishness among Scots themselves during the nineteenth and twentieth centuries and beyond. The construction of haggis as “a taste of Scotland” within the cultural nationalist discourses of writers such as McNeill, and its commodification in the

context of the Scottish tourism industry, should by now be recognisable as yet another expressive cultural text that encodes a particular perspective on what it means to be Scottish. To answer the question posed in my thesis title, then, far from offering an unproblematic "taste of Scotland," haggis is a constantly evolving collection of expressive texts about Scottishness, a cultural complex that is richly deserving of further investigation.

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# Appendix A: Text of Robert Burns's "To a Haggis" (from Burns 1787b)

Fair fa' your honest, sonsy face, Great Chieftan o' the Puddin'-race! Aboon them a' ye tak your place, Painch, tripe, or thairm; Weel are ye wordy of a <i>grace</i> As lang's my arm.	<i>good luck to, cheerful</i>  <i>above</i> <i>paunch, guts</i> <i>well, worthy</i> <i>long as</i>
The groaning trencher there ye fill, Your hurdies like a distant hill, Your <i>pin</i> wad help to mend a mill In time o' need, While thro' your pores the dews distil Like amber bead.	  <i>buttocks</i> <i>skewer would</i>    
His knife see Rustic-labour dight, An' cut you up wi' ready slight, Trenching your gushing entrails bright Like onie ditch; And then, O what a glorious sight, Warm-reekin, rich!	  <i>wipe</i> <i>skill</i>   <i>any</i>  <i>steaming</i>
Then, horn for horn they stretch an' strive, Deil tak the hindmost, on they drive, Till a' their weel-swallow'd kytes belyve Are bent like drums; Then auld Guidman, maist like to rive, <i>Bethankit</i> hums.	  <i>horn spoon</i> <i>devil take</i> <i>well-swollen stomachs eventually</i>   <i>old Goodman, most, burst</i>
Is there that owre his French <i>ragout</i> , Or <i>olio</i> that wad staw a sow, Or <i>fricassee</i> wad mak her spew Wi' perfect sconner, Looks down wi' sneering, scornfu' view On sic a dinner?	  <i>over</i> <i>bloat</i>  <i>disgust</i>  <i>such</i>
Poor devil! see him owre his trash, As feckless as a wither'd rash, His spindle shank a guid whip-lash, His nieve a nit; Thro' bluidy flood or field to dash, O how unfit!	    <i>rush</i> <i>skinny leg</i> <i>fist, nut</i> <i>bloody</i>



But mark the Rustic, *haggis-fed*,  
The trembling earth resounds his tread,  
Clap in his walie nieve a blade,

He'll mak it whistle;  
An' legs, an' arms, an' heads will sned,  
Like taps o' thrissle.

Ye Pow'rs wha mak mankind your care,  
And dish them out their bill o' fare,  
Auld Scotland wants nae skinking ware

That jaups in luggies;  
But, if ye wish her gratefu' pray'r,  
Gie her a *Haggis*!

*firm fist*

*cut off*  
*tops of thistles*

*who*

*no watery*  
*splashes in bowls*

*give*

## Appendix B: Text of Burns's "Bruce to his men at Bannockburn"

Scots, wha hae wi' Wallace bled,	<i>who have</i>
Scots, wham Bruce has aften led;	<i>whom, often</i>
Welcome to your gory bed,	
Or to victorie!	

Now's the day, and now's the hour;  
 See the front o' battle lour;  
 See approach proud Edward's pow'r—  
 Chains and slaverie!

Wha will be a traitor-knave?	
Wha can fill a coward's grave?	
Wha sae base as be a slave!	<i>so</i>
Let him turn and flee!	

Wha for Scotland's king and law	
Freedom's sword will strongly draw,	
Freeman stand, or freeman fa',	<i>fall</i>
Let him follow me!	

By oppression's woes and pains!  
 By our sons in servile chains!  
 We will drain our dearest veins,  
 But they shall be free!

Lay the proud usurpers low!  
 Tyrants fall in every foe!  
 Liberty's in every blow!—  
 Let us do or die!

**Appendix C: Text of Robert Fergusson's "To the Principal and Professors of the University of St Andrews, on their superb treat to Dr Samuel Johnson" (from Fergusson 1773)**

St ANDREWS town may look right gawsy,  
 Nae GRASS will grow upon her cawsey,  
 Nor wa'-flow'rs of a yellow dye,  
 Glour dowy o'er her RUINS high,  
 Sin' SAMY's head weel pang'd wi' lear,  
 Has seen the ALMA MATER there:  
 Regents, my winsome billy boys!  
 'Bout him you've made an unco noise;  
 Nae doubt for him your bells wad clink  
 To find him upon EDEN's brink,  
 An' a' things nicely set in order,  
 Wad kep him on the Fifean border;  
 I'se warrant now frae France an' Spain,  
 Baith COOKS and SCULLIONS mony ane  
 Wad gar the pats an' kettles tingle  
 Around the college kitchen ingle,  
 To fleg frae a' your craigs the roup,  
 Wi' reeking het and crieshy soup;  
 And *snails* and *puddocks* mony hunder  
 Wad beeking lie the hearth-stane under,  
 Wi' roast and boild, an' a' kin kind,  
 To heat the body, cool the mind.

But hear me lads! gin I'd been there,  
 How I wad trimm'd the bill o' fare!  
 For ne'er sic surly wight as he  
 Had met wi' sic respect frae me.  
 Mind ye what SAM, the lying loun!  
 Has in his Dictionar laid down?  
 That ARTS in England are a feast  
 To cow an' horse, an' sican beast,  
 While in Scots ground this growth was common  
 To gust the gab o' MAN an' WOMAN.  
 Tak tent, ye REGENTS! then, an' hear  
 My list o' gudely hamel gear,  
 Sic as ha'e often rax'd the wyme  
 O' blyther fallows mony time;  
 Mair hardy, souple, steive an' swank,  
 Than ever stood on SAMY's shank.

*stately*  
*no, street*  
*wallflowers*  
*frown gloomy*  
*well packed with learning*

*remarkable*  
*would*

*meet, border of Fife*  
*I'll, from*  
*both, many a one*  
*make, pots, ring*

*scare away, throats, hoarseness*  
*steaming hot, oily*  
*frogs, many hundreds*  
*warming, hearthstone*

*if*  
*would have trimmed*  
*such*

*rogue*

*oats*  
*suchlike*

*delight the palate*  
*take heed*  
*homely*  
*have, stretched the belly*  
*happier fellows*  
*more, supple, firm and strong*

*Imprimis*, then, a haggis fat,  
 Weel tottl'd in a seything pat,  
 Wi' *spice* and *ingans* weel ca'd thro'  
 Had help'd to gust the stirrah's mow,  
 And plac'd itsel in truncher clean  
 Before the gilpy's glowrin een.

*Secundo*, then a gude sheep's head  
 Whase hide was singit, never flead,  
 And four black trotters cled wi' girsle,  
 Bedown his throat had learn'd to hirsle.  
 What think ye neist, o' gude fat brose  
 To clag his ribs? a dainty dose!  
 And white and bloody puddins routh,  
 To gar the Doctor skirl, O Drouth!  
 Whan he cou'd never houp to merit  
 A cordial glass o' reaming claret,  
 But thraw his nose, and brize and pegh  
 O'er the contents o' sma' ale quegh:  
 Then let his wisdom girn an' snarl  
 O'er a weel-tostit girdle farl,  
 An' learn, that maugre o' his wame,  
 Ill bairns are ay best heard at hame.

Drummond, lang syne, o' Hawthornden,  
 The wyliest an' best o' men,  
 Has gi'en you dishes ane or mae,  
 That wad ha' gard his grinders play,  
 Not to *roast beef*, old England's life,  
 But to the auld *east nook of Fife\**,  
 Where Creilian crafts cou'd weel ha'e gi'en  
 Scate-rumples to ha'e clear'd his een;  
 Then neist whan SAMY'S heart was faintin,  
 He'd lang'd for scate to mak him wanton.

Ah! willawins, for Scotland now,  
 Whan she maun stap ilk birky's mow  
 Wi' eistacks, grown as 'tware in pet  
 In foreign land, or green-house het,  
 When cog o' brose an' cutty spoon  
 Is a' your cottar childer's boon,  
 Wha thro' the week, till Sunday's speal,  
 Toil for pease-clods an' gude lang kail.  
 Devall then, Sirs, and never send  
 For daintiths to regale a friend,  
 Or, like a torch at baith ends burning,  
 Your house 'll soon grow mirk and mourning.

*boiled, seething pot  
 onions, mixed  
 lad's mouth*

*rascal's, glowering eyes*

*whose, singed, flayed  
 clad with gristle  
 rustle  
 next, oatmeal dish with butter  
 stick to  
 plenty  
 make, Thirst!  
 when, hope  
 foaming  
 twist, squeeze, pant  
 small, drinking cup  
 whine  
 well-toasted oatcake  
 despite, stomach  
 children, always, home  
 long ago*

*given, one or more  
 made*

*boats from Crail  
 skate-tails, eyes  
 next  
 longed  
 alas  
 must stop every fellow's mouth  
 dainties, as it were, like pets  
 hot  
 wooden dish, short  
 lads'  
 who, time of rest  
 coarse pease-meal rolls, colewart  
 cease  
 delicacies  
 both  
 dark*

What's this I hear some cynic say?

Robin, ye loun! it's nae fair play;  
Is there nae ither subject rife  
To clap your thumb upon but Fife?  
Gi'e o'er, young man, you'll meet your coming,  
Than caption war, or charge o' horning;  
Some canker'd surly sour-mow'd carline  
Bred near the abbey o' Dumfarline,  
Your shoulders yet may gi'e a lounder,  
An' be of verse the mal-confounder.

Come on ye blades! but 'ere ye tulzie,  
Or hack our flesh wi' sword or gulzie,  
Ne'er shaw your teeth, nor look like stink,  
Nor o'er an empty bicker blink:  
What weets the wizen an' the wyme,  
Will mend your prose and heal my rhyme.

*Edin. Sept. 1*

R. FERGUSSON.

*\* Alluding to two tunes under these titles.*

*rogue, not  
no other, available*

*get your deserts  
summons for debt, worse, bankruptcy  
ill-natured, sour-mouthed  
Dunfermline  
sound blow*

*fight  
large knife  
show  
drinking cup  
wets the gullet, stomach*



